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TALES FROM SOUTH MISSOURI

by

Vance Randolph

Stories like these were told to backwoods children in the 1880's and 1890's, and are remembered by many elderly folk today. The items which follow are taken from a large file of similar material which I have collected in the Ozark region since 1920. Publication of the entire collection is impracticable; it would require many months to classify the material and to supply an introduction and adequate notes. Since I am not in a position to undertake this work, I have decided to print a few samplings in the journals, by way of calling attention to the existent material. Later I shall deposit a typescript of the whole collection in the Folklore Section of the Library of Congress, where it will be available to students of these matters.

THE WOMAN AND THE ROBBER

Told by Mr. Jeff Strong, at Roaring River near Cassville, Mo., April, 1941. He says it was a common neighborhood story about 1900.

Once upon a time, maybe it was in the War Between the States, a woman was carrying gold and greenbacks under her clothes. She was taking it to some of her kinfolks up North, where things was not so disorderly. She had a good buggy at home, but it was better to keep off the main traveled road, so she come through on horseback, a-riding side-saddle. She rode up to a house, and the man said he would show her a short cut where she wanted to go. When they come out on a high bluff he pulled her off the horse and says "Give me your money." She says that the money is sewed under her dress and he must look the other way, as she is a decent woman. He kind of turned, and in that minute she out with a derringer and shot him before he could throw down on her. Soon as he was dead the woman took his wallet and pushed him over the edge, and then she went on down the road. When she got to her kinfolks' place she told them what happened. After the trouble blowed over they all come South again, and camped with their wagons on top of the big bluff. And next morning the

boys went around by the path, and found a lot of dead people at the bottom of the holler. They was folks that this man had robbed and then throwed off the bluff so they couldn't tell nobody.

THE PALLET ON THE FLOOR

Told by Mr. William Gentry, Galena, Mo., May, 1933. He heard it about 1910, as the experience of "Sugarheel" Hodge, a lawyer who lived in Galena in the 1890's.

Once upon a time a fellow was traveling through the country, and it was a-raining, and he was looking for a place to stay all night. Just before sundown he come to a little old log house. There was a man and a woman there, with three young-ones. They only had one bed, but the man he allowed there's always room for a traveler. "You can have the bed," says he, "and me and my woman will sleep on a pallet with the kids."

After supper they set around and swapped whoppers a while, and when the children got sleepy the woman put them in the bed. Pretty soon two of the kids was sound asleep, and the man he picked them up careful and moved them to the pallet on the floor. So then the folks talked some more, and the other boy he went to sleep, and they laid him on the pallet too. "The bed's all your'n, stranger," says the man. "You just turn in whenever you get ready. There's plenty of room on the pallet for me and the old woman." So the fellow went to bed. He was tired from riding all day, and he slept fine.

When the traveler woke up next morning it was still pretty dark, and seemed like the bed had got awful hard. But he just laid there till dawn. And then he seen that he wasn't in the bed at all. He was laying on the pallet with the kids. The man and the woman was in the bed, snoring like somebody sawing gourds. The fellow got up quiet and went outdoors awhile. He set out by the barn till he heard somebody splitting wood. When he come back everybody was up and the woman was cooking breakfast. "You sure do get up early, stranger," says the man. "If you'd slept a little longer, me and the old woman would have put you back in bed. We always do strangers thataway, an' mighty few of 'em ever know the difference."

OLD KITTY ROLLINS

Told by Mr. J. H. McGee, Joplin, Mo., July, 1934. He had it from some children at Sparta, Mo., about the turn of the century.

Once upon a time a traveler was a-riding down the road, and he seen a house that was chuck full of cats. There was cats running all over the place, and setting on the gallery, and some had even got up on the roof. One great big tomcat walked over to the traveler and says "When you get to the next house, stop and tell 'em that old Kitty Rollins is dead." He could talk just like a human, with a big loud coarse voice at that.

So the traveler rode on, and the next house he come to looked like it was

plumb deserted. But the traveler got down and went in anyhow, and there was just one old bedraggled looking cat a-setting in the corner by the fireplace. "I come to tell you that old Kitty Rollins is dead," says the traveler. The old bedraggled looking cat jumped up and says "By God, I'll be king yet!" and out of the door he run.

THE RAIL-SPLITTER AND THE INDIANS

Told by Mr. Pete Woolsey, Pineville, Mo., September, 1924. He believed that the story originated in Benton county, Ark.

Once upon a time a fellow was splitting rails to build him a fence, as they did not have no wire fences in them days. He got his wedge into a white-oak log, and had just drove in the glut, when all of a sudden there was four big Indians a-standing right beside him. They had their war-paint on. One was carrying a big brass pistol, and the others had tomahawks in their hands. The rail-splitter's rifle was standing against a tree ten foot off, on the other side of the log. He seen he didn't have no chance.

One of the big Indians says "Come with us" and motioned towards the pineries. "Help me split this here rail-cut," says the fellow, "and I'll go wherever you say." Then he reached down and grabbed a hold of the log, like he figured on busting it open with his bare hands. The Indians grinned, as they thought all white men was crazy anyhow. So all four of them grabbed a hold of the log, and made out like they was pulling hard as they could. They thought it was a good joke, but the rail-splitter knewed what he was doing. Soon as all four Indians got their hands in the crack he grabbed his maul and knocked out the dogwood glut. Them Indians yelled so you could hear them a mile off, but they could not do nothing because their hands was caught in the crack.

So then the rail-splitter took his maul and knocked them four Indians in the head. "That'll learn these here savages not to fool with me," he says. And when he got home he told his woman a big windy about how four Indians jumped on him, and they fit a long time, but finally he killed them all. The woman she just laughed at first, like she didn't believe it. But when he showed her the big brass pistol and the three tomahawks and some other things he took off the dead Indians, she didn't have no more to say.

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

Told by Mrs. Elizabeth Maddocks, Joplin, Mo., June, 1937. She heard it near Chadwick, Mo., about 1900. "We didn't have any story-books," she said. "I was a grown woman before I ever saw this tale in print."

Once upon a time there was three little pigs. One pig built him a chip house, one built him a stick house, and one built him a rock house. When the old fox come to the chip house he says "Let me in, Piggy-Wee. If you don't, I'll puff and I'll blow till I blow your house down." But the little pig was afraid, and he wouldn't open the door. So the old fox he puffed and he blowed till the house fell down, and then he et the little pig up.

Next day the old fox come to the stick house and says "Let me in, Piggy-Wee.

If you don't, I'll puff and I'll blow till I blow your house down." But the little pig was afraid, and he wouldn't open the door. So the old fox he puffed and he blowed till the house fell down, and then he et the little pig up.

Finally the old fox come to the rock house, and he says "Let me in, Piggy-Wee. If you don't, I'll puff and I'll blow till I blow your house down." But the little pig was afraid, and he wouldn't open the door. So the old fox he puffed and he blowed, but the rock house wouldn't fall down. Then the old fox says "Let me get the end of my nose in," and the little pig opened the door a crack. Then the old fox says "Let me get a little more of my nose in," and the little pig opened the door another crack. Then the old fox says "Let me get my eyes in," and the little pig opened the door another crack. Then the old fox says "Let me get a little more of my eyes in," and the little pig opened the door another crack. Then the old fox says "Let me get my ears in," and the little pig opened the door another crack. And so it went on with the old fox getting a little more of his ears in. Then his neck, and a little more of his neck. Then his front feet, and a little more of his front feet. Then his ribs, and a little more of his ribs. Finally the old fox was all inside the house but his tail, and then he just busted on in without asking the little pig nothing.

Next the old fox set down by the fire and he says "Warm belly gut. Eat a pig pretty soon." Just then they heard the hounds coming round the mountain, and the old fox says "Piggy-Wee, where can I hide?" And the little pig says "Jump in that big trunk." So the old fox jumped in the big trunk, and Piggy-Wee slammed down the lid and locked it. Then he got some hot water out of the kettle and poured it through a little hole, and the old fox says "Piggy-Wee, there's a flea biting me." Then the little pig poured in some more water, and the old fox says "Piggy-Wee, there's a fire burning me." Then the little pig poured in the whole kettle of water, and the old fox hollered something terrible, but it didn't do him no good. Pretty soon the old fox was scalded plumb to death, and the little pig lived happy in his rock house till the butcher cut him down.

DIVIDING UP THE DEAD

Told by Mrs. Marie Wilbur, Pineville, Mo., June, 1930. She had it from Mrs. Lucinda Mosier, also of Pineville, who heard it about 1885.

Once upon a time there was a preacher come through the country, and he was making too free with the womenfolks. Finally it got so bad that something had to be done, so two bear-hunters laid for him in the burying-ground close to the big road. One was a little dried-up fellow, and the other one was pretty fat. They had their guns ready, and a little jug to keep off seed-ticks. They figured the preacher would come along the road about four o'clock, but he never showed up. They waited a long time, and drunk the jug plumb dry. The fat bear-hunter got kind of chicken-hearted, and he says maybe it's bad luck to kill a preacher anyhow. And the little dried-up fellow says he don't mind killing preachers, but sitting on the ground is bad for the rheumatism.

Just about that time a couple of boys come along with a sack of pawpaws.

They slipped into the graveyard by the back way, and set down by the stone wall. They did not see the bear-hunters on the other side of the wall, and the hunters could not see them, neither. The boys spread their pawpaws on the ground, and begun to divide them up. "You take this one, I'll take that one," says the oldest boy. "You take this one, I'll take that one," says he. He said it kind of sing-song, like boys naturally do when they are dividing up pawpaws. The two men heard all this, but they couldn't see nothing, and they didn't know who it was doing the talking. They thought maybe there was devils in the burying-ground, dividing up the dead.

The boys had got the pawpaws in separate piles by now, and the oldest boy says "Well, that's all, except them two over there by the wall. You take the dried-up one, and I'll take the fat one." The bear-hunters heard this plain, and figured they was being counted in with the corpses. The little dried-up fellow give a loud whoop and lit out for home. The big fat bear-hunters didn't do no hollering, but he sure tore down the brush getting away from there.

That same night, a fool woman told the preacher how the menfolks was fixing to kill him, and the next morning he showed up missing. Some say that one of the bear-hunters shot him and buried him out in the woods somewhere. But most folks figured he just skipped plumb out of the country. Nobody in them parts ever seen him again, anyhow. And that's all there is to the story.

PENNYWINKLE! PENNYWINKLE!

Told by Mr. Lon Kelley, Pineville, Mo., July, 1930. He had it from his parents, who were pioneer settlers in McDonald county, Mo.

Once upon a time there was a woman who got mad at her husband about something, so she killed their baby with the fire-shovel. Then she skinned the baby just like a rabbit, and cut it up just like a rabbit, and cooked it just like a rabbit. When her man come home that night she set the meat on the table. Him and her was not speaking, so he didn't ask nobody what kind of meat it was. He set down and et every scrap of the meat, and the woman sent her daughter to put the bones under a marble stone down by the spring-house.

Nobody said a word all evening, so pretty soon they went to bed but they could not get no sleep. It seemed like something was a-crawling around in the house, and crying. After while the man he says: "Who's there? What do you want?" And then the little ghost hollered back: "Pennywinkle! Pennywinkle! My Maw killed me, my Paw et me, my sister buried my bones under a marble stone! I want my liver and lights and wi-i-i-ney pipes! Pennywinkle! Pennywinkle!" And when the fellow heard this, he got to thinking about what it meant. So after while he got out of bed and went down to the spring-house and found the baby's bones under a marble stone.

Well, the fellow set there a while, and whetted up his knife. Then he went back to the house, and cut his wife's head off. The step-daughter she run away through the woods, and nobody ever did find out what become of her. The folks took the baby's head and skin and bones out from under the marble stone, and put them in a regular little coffin, and buried them in the graveyard. And that is the end of the "Pennywinkle" story.

THE LITTLE BOY AND THE SNAKE

Told by Mr. Pete Woolsey, Pineville, Mo., September, 1924. He heard the story from people who had lived in Benton county, Ark., and McDonald county, Mo.

Once upon a time there was a woman and she had a little boy. Every day she would give him a bowl of bread-and-milk. He always carried the bread-and-milk out in the brush to eat it. She thought it was kind of funny he wouldn't eat in the house, but she did not say nothing. Every day she heard the little boy talking and laughing out in the brush, but she figured he was talking to himself. He could talk pretty good for his age. A girl told her that the boy was always playing with a big snake, but the woman didn't believe it.

One day she slipped through the fence to find out what the little boy was doing, and she seen him setting on the ground with a big yellow rattlesnake winding around his legs. He would eat a little of his bread-and-milk, and then give some to the snake. They was having a fine time together. That was why the little boy always took his bread-and-milk out in the brush that way, and would not play with the other children.

The woman did not say nothing, but she went back to the house and got the shotgun. Pretty soon the rattlesnake seen her coming. It moved away from the little boy, and then reared up and begun to rattle. So then the woman shot the big snake and killed it. The little boy did not make no fuss. He just looked at his mother once, and his eyes was like snake-eyes. Then he went back to the house, and he never spoke another word to anybody. He never laughed no more, and he never eat another bite except some leaves off a weed. Nobody knowned what kind of a weed it was. On sunny days he just layed out in the sunshine, with his eyes wide open. He just kind of pined away, and got thinner. They had the town doctor, but it didn't do no good. About three weeks after she killed the big snake, the woman found her little boy laying in the path, and he was dead. His mouth looked kind of funny, and his eyes was not like other little boys' eyes.

The town doctor said maybe the little boy was poisoned by eating weeds. But the kinfolks did not believe no such foolishness. Everybody knowned that the woman's first husband was part Cherokee, and he was a kind of snake-looking fellow. It was against his religion to kill snakes. Some folks thought maybe there was a little cross of rattlesnake in the family.

THEY RUINED THE MEAT

Told by Mr. Lew Beardon, Branson, Mo., December, 1938. He heard it near Walnut Shade, Mo., in the 1890's. "Some folks tell it for the truth," said he.

Once upon a time there was a well-to-do family, and they had a nice piece of home-cured bacon. It was the only bacon for miles around, because times was hard and most people didn't have no meat except rabbits. Well, the folks

that owned the bacon never thought of eating it; they just used it to season their beans. The neighbors would borrow the meat once in a while, if they was going to have company, or a wedding in the family, or something like that.

The meat lasted through the winter fine, but along about the middle of March it got pretty weak. You had to bile it in a pot of beans all day, to season them up right. But it still smelled like bacon, and the folks figured there was a lot of good wear in that meat yet. Then a gang of newcomers moved into the neighborhood, and nothing would do but they must borrow the meat on Easter Sunday. They was kind of dirty-looking people, but the old lady didn't want to hurt nobody's feelings, so she let 'em have it.

Well, sir, when them foreigners fetched the meat back, you wouldn't have knowed it! The stuff was green as grass, and smelled like green cordwood. The old lady didn't let on, though. She just says "Well, I hope you enjoyed your beans." The newcomer's woman she giggled kind of foolish. "We didn't have no beans, ma'am. There ain't been a bean in our house since Christmas. But my boy he picked some fence-corner greens, and that bacon sure did flavor 'em wonderful." When the old lady told the folks about it they got pretty mad, and there was some talk of running the newcomers out of the country. But the old lady was against it. "Them poor people don't know any better," she says. "We'll just cut the meat up and throw it to the chickens, and not say nothing to nobody." So that's what they done.

THE PIN IN THE GATEPOST

Told by Mr. A. W. Marshall, Pineville, Mo., January, 1920. He heard the story in southwest Missouri, during the War Between the States.

Once upon a time there was a good-looking girl with a fine figger, but her eyes got so weak she could not see nothing hardly, and she would not wear specs. Her mother was trying to get her married off, and she set her cap for a rich old man who had two big farms. The old man didn't know that the girl was almost blind, and she and the old lady did not aim to let him find out. Whenever he come to see her they set everything exactly in the right place, so she could reach out and pick up whatever she wanted. And when he asked her to go buggy-riding she says no. She told him her mother did not think it was right for a girl to go buggy-riding with a man until after they was married.

One day she stuck a pin in the gatepost, and when the old man come to see her they was setting out on the porch. Pretty soon she says "What's that on the gatepost?" And the old man looked, and he says he don't see nothing. "Well," says the girl, "it looks to me like a pin sticking in the gatepost." So they walked down the path, and sure enough there was the pin. And the old man says "My Gosh, you have got good eyes!" The girl she just grinned, and put the pin in the front of her dress for luck.

Everything would have been all right except they had a big white cat. Mostly it would just lay by the fire all day, but sometimes it would get a wild spell and jump right up on the table. Well, when they set down to supper that night, the rich old man he returned thanks. Soon as he says "Amen" somebody set a

pitcher of buttermilk right in front of him. The girl hollered "Scat, you brute!" and knocked the pitcher off the table, because she thought it must be the cat. The rich old man seen how things was, but he did not say nothing. He just wiped the buttermilk off of his pants, and got in his buggy and went home. He never did come back there no more, neither. It served the old girl right, for trying to fool him with the pin in the gatepost.

Eureka Springs, Arkansas.

THE PROBLEM OF BALLAD-STORY VARIATION AND EUGENE HAUN'S "THE DROWSY SLEEPER"¹

by
Tristram P. Coffin

One of the central problems of folksong study, a problem that has been consistently ignored by folksong scholars, is *how* ballad stories change and are modified, how new ballads develop from old. To my knowledge there has never been a clear attempt to analyze and identify the process by which such narrative variation takes place. Firstly, most scholars working on variation have dealt with changes as they effect words, meanings, and localities rather than as they effect stories.² Secondly, the process of story change is baffling. For, although we may pick up songs in any stage of development, because of the only recent interest in folklore we have almost no examples of texts of exactly the same variant of a song, say two, four, and seven generations apart.³

However, during the last two years, when my attention has been directed largely to the British ballad in America, I have been able to see a definite pattern of ballad-story variation taking focus under my eyes. In this paper it is my desire to present the pattern as I have found it in the hope that ballad scholars with a concrete and concise guide before them will be encouraged to work toward a concrete and definite solution of this vital and vexing problem of folksong scholarship.

It seems to me that the sequence of ballad-story variation can be broken down into four points: (1) some sort of misunderstanding of the events of the narrative behind the song; (2) an adaption of the original narrative material to fit the new conception of the story that rises from the misunderstanding; (3) omission, and so the forgetting, of the seemingly superfluous remains of the

¹ This paper was read as part of the program at the 79th meeting of the Ohio College Association and Allied Societies and in connection with the organization meeting of the Ohio Folklore Society: Columbus, Ohio, April 21, 1950.

² For example, consult the headnotes in H. M. Belden, *Missouri Folksongs* (*University of Missouri Studies*, XV, No. 1, 1940); Jane Zielonko's M.A. thesis, *Some American Variants of Child Ballads*, Columbia University, 1945; Phillips Barry's headnotes in *British Ballads from Maine* (New Haven, 1929) and in *The New Green Mountain Songster* (New Haven, 1939); and the *Bulletin of the Folksong Society of the Northeast* (Cambridge, 1930-38). Perhaps the closest thing to a discussion of "story variation" that I have seen is Phillips Barry's essay on "Henry Martyn" (Child 250), *British Ballads from Maine*, 248 ff.

³ See the study made by Foster Graham, *JAFL*, XLVII, 385, where he discusses two texts of "Sir Hugh" (Child 155), one taken from a small girl and the other from her grandmother who taught the song to her.

original narrative material; (4) minor modifications and associations encouraged by the new meanings introduced into the text.

This pattern, while it is consistent and can be illustrated and verified in the light of a large body of texts, nevertheless is subject to certain reservations. One must remember that word and phrase variation is continually present in the oral transmission of songs, that artisitic or commercial tamperings (such as those of a Scott or a stall printer) will change songs radically,⁴ and that use of a ballad for a specific purpose (such as a play-party or a lullaby)⁵ will cause modification. Also, one must keep in mind that such a sequence is dynamic and may occur more than once so that it is possible for a song to be driven far from its original narrative base, that the sequence may begin at any time, with any singer who possesses a song, and that a collector may pick up a song at any stage in the sequence.

In the confines of a short study it is difficult to illustrate adequately a concept that relies on the traditions and details of many, many texts for its verification. The best one can do is to indicate through representative examples the structure of the mosaic and express his confidence that others pursuing the leads farther will quickly arrive at the same four-point conclusion. The following indications, thus, cannot be considered conclusive as they stand, but rather should be seen to represent conclusive blocks of evidence that lie in bulk outside the limits of this paper. Generally, the material presented immediately below can be considered explanatory.

A misunderstanding of the events of a narrative can come in the oral process from a number of forces. As in the American "Ole Bangum" version of the medievalistic "Sir Lionel"⁶ there is often such an over-simplification of the tale that most of the original details have become intolerable. And, sometimes, a singer will simply forget key lines or phrases, usually because he has not heard or sung a text for many years, and there occurs an elimination of pertinent action and particulars. The Wisconsin text of "The Queen of Elfan's Norice" (Child 40)⁷ illustrates this point in that the traditional story of the girl who is abducted to wet-nurse a fairy babe cannot be gleaned from the 20th century lines unless the original story is already known. Other times, because of inattentiveness or

⁴ See, for example, Sir Walter Scott's poem "Jock of Hazeldean" or Belden, *op. cit.*, 52-4, where there appears a discussion of "Lord Lovel" (Child 75).

⁵ A graphic example of such modification is the version of "Sir Hugh" (Child 155) which, as it was used as a lullaby, was sung without the bloody stanzas. See Arthur P. Hudson, *Folk Songs of Mississippi* (Chapel Hill, 1936), p. 116.

⁶ See Arthur Kyle Davis, *Traditional Ballads of Virginia* (Cambridge, 1929), 125 ff. for a number of degenerate texts.

⁷ See *JAFL*, XX, 155.

perhaps localization an over-literal interpretation of elements in a ballad will cause a confusion in the narrative events. For example, in certain North Carolina and Georgia versions of "Sally and Billy" (usually misleadingly labelled Child 295) the famous lines,

Oh am I the doctor that you sent for me?
Or am I the young man whom you wanted to see?

have resulted in the lover's becoming a physician.⁸ In addition, changes in society will often trouble the singers of folksongs, and results like "Ole Bangum" and the modification of the leper-motif in "Lamkin (Child 93)"⁹ occur. The important thing, however, is not what finally evolves, but that a confusion of some sort will be initially present in oral tradition before narrative variation begins.

Once this state of confusion has established itself with the singer there seems to be a natural desire to rationalize the events into some less troublesome, more logical story. This desire may be conscious or sub-conscious, but it seems to be present in every case. All folksong scholars are familiar with the use made by singers of cliches, localizations, and "borrowed" matter¹⁰ in patching up fragmentary works, a trend which sometimes culminates in the merging of two whole ballads like "Edward" (Child 13) and "The Twa Brothers" (Child 49). In the Canadian "Andrew Lammie" (Child 233), because the familiar cliche,

O mother, make my bed,
And make it soft and bonny,
My true love died for me today,
I'll die for him tomorrow.¹¹

has crept in, the lover appears to have died before his sweetheart, although much of the drama of the original story centers on the fact that she dies first. While the "Bill Harman" localization of "The Gypsy Laddie" (Child 200) makes specific (thus changing radically) a story that is quite general in its usual form.¹²

⁸ See Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles, *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians* (Oxford, 1932), I, 295. See also John Powell, *Five Virginia Folksongs* (New York, n.d.), p. 9.

⁹ See Fannie Eckstrom's article in *JAFL*, LII, 74.

¹⁰ See *JAFL*, LXII, 156-61.
¹¹ W. Roy MacKenzie, *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia* (Cambridge, 1928), pp. 60 and 124.

¹² J. Harrington Cox, *Folksong of the South* (Cambridge, 1925), p. 130.

On the other hand, these same folksong scholars are aware that outdated or foreign concepts tend to be rationalized or modified when no longer understood. The ghostless texts of "James Harris" (Child 243), the harpless texts of "The Twa Sisters" (Child 10), the fairyless texts of "Johnny Collins" (Child 85), among others, illustrate the point.

Very often, of course, when new material is adopted to fit an old song that has been subject to confusion of some sort a certain amount of incompatible or unrelated story material will be present. That is, after story variation of the sort described above occurs, odds and ends of narrative will remain from the original tale. This material is superfluous and unharmonious. Most singers will cease singing such clumsy story-matter and thus soon forget it. And although there is no doubt that once in a while scholars will turn up a song so utterly degenerate as to meaning that the text is completely storyless and an utter jumble of superfluous details remains, such abortions are rare and undoubtedly survive as pretty, nonsense songs — not as true ballads.¹³ For while many an informant will stubbornly retain discordant material simply because that is the way he learned the song, seldom have such particulars been honored if they interfere with whatever concept of the basic story the singer holds.

At any rate, the omission and forgetting done at this stage tends to drive a song farther and farther from the original story and to cement any new concept of the tale more and more solidly into what has become its new and modified oral tradition. And as there may be as many traditions of a song as singers, when the whole process of story variation as it is outlined here begins to occur again with respect to the fresh concept of the tale more and more widely diffusing narratives result. New confusions followed by new adaptions occur, with the subsequent new omissions and forgettings. Sometimes, when the process has gone on long enough, action, character and motivation, and setting (the basic elements of narrative) can differ so greatly as to seem almost unrelated in various texts of the same song. And, sometimes, even a whole new ballad may evolve from an old song, as "Henry Martyn" (Child 250) evolved from "Sir Andrew Barton" (Child 167) and "Clerk Colvill" (Child 42) and "George Collins" (Child 85) evolved from "Johnny Collins".¹⁴

While the representative material above certainly supports a belief in the four-point pattern of ballad-story variation, the whole picture of this narrative development can only become clear if we can see the process in operation within

¹³ See *publications of the Texas Folklore Society*, VII, 111 and X, 149; *JAFL*, XLV, 54; and Reed Smith, *South Carolina Ballads* (Cambridge, 1928), p. 64.

¹⁴ The Barry discussion of "Henry Martyn" (Child 250) and "Sir Andrew Barton" (Child 167) cited in Footnote 4 and Samuel P. Bayard's work on the "Johnny Collins" tradition, *JAFL*, LVIII, 73 ff. reveal examples of single songs that have split into two separate ballads.

the tradition of one song. Yet obviously it is difficult to obtain such a view as the oral process is so highly subjective and, as I stated earlier, it has seldom been possible to obtain (knowingly, at least) the text of one tradition of a song at stages of its evolution.

However, during the last year, I obtained a ballad and supporting commentary that helps to bring the whole problem into focus.

THE DROWSY SLEEPER

Wake up, wake up, you drowsy sleeper:¹⁵
 The morning wind blows with the tide.
 How can you bear to lie in slumber
 When your true love lies at your side?

Her face was pale; her eyes were blue,
 And black as ravenwing her hair,
 The smell of flowers in her bosom:
 Men wept to see a maid so fair.

Oh Mary, Mary tell your father
 That you would wed this night with me.
 If he says no, come back at morning.
 We'll sail away across the sea.

Oh love, my father passed his word,
 As he lay on his bed at rest.
 And in his hand he held a dagger
 Which I hold now within my breast.

Wake up, wake up, you drowsy sleeper.
 Wake up, wake up, it's almost day.
 How can you bear to lie in slumber
 When your true love lies cold as clay?

The next of this rather unusual variant of the British broadside, "The Drowsy

¹⁵ Mr. Haun, who transcribed the music for this article, uses both "sleeper" and "sleepers" here. The melody has been widely popularized by Burl Ives through his "Wayfarin' Stranger." It is an old white spiritual tune.

Sleeper,"¹⁶ was received by me from Mr. Eugene Haun now of Philadelphia, Pa. Mr. Haun, who is a native of Arkansas, learned the song from a hill woman, Mrs. Mary Lou (Brown) Miller, about 1932.¹⁷ He writes,

Grandma Miller's songs and stories are among the most vivid memories of my childhood, and she herself is a permanent image. We did not know how old she was, nor did she herself, and she did not care. She had been a girl old enough to be married at the time "the War" started, but she was, she recalled, still young enough to want to play the games of the hill children: Clap-in-and-clap-out; Go-in-and-out-the-windows; etc. She had grown up, a motherless tom-boy in the care of her old grandmother, on a farm near Dardanelle, Arkansas, near Russellville. It was from her grandmother that she had learned her songs by rote, since she could neither read nor write. As she grew older, apparently the old songs grew clearer and more precious to her. If no one was about, she would sing them to herself; but she was happiest when the neighborhood children would gather to listen, in the evenings after supper, and she would sing for an hour or more, or tell stories, some of which she made up on the spot, others concerned with traditional themes.

She sang always with her head tilted back, her gaze fixed somewhere over the horizon, and her mouth shaped into a kind of trumpet. Her voice was high, thin, and clear, with a hair-raising tremolo in climax. The face was expressionless, and all interpretation was left to the voice, being expressed by variation in intensity of tone-quality rather than by variation in tempo or volume.¹⁸

Mr. Haun himself is one of those rare finds — a man who although now educated and cosmopolitan still knows folk material from direct and uncultured contact with the oral tradition of his youth, a man who although deeply fond of the old songs has at present no personal scholarly or commercial interest in them, a man who although he sings the few songs he learned years ago has not added to or made specific use of this material since he left "his people." In short, Mr. Haun remains still a genuine informant for ballads, if not a genuine member of the folk.

Mr. Haun's variant is also unusual in its extreme compression of the story

¹⁶ An excellent bibliography to other texts of this song can be had by consulting Belden, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-9. The song is also known as "The Bedroom Window," "Awake! Awake!", and "The Death of William and Nancy."

¹⁷ Mrs. Miller was evidently able to sing "old songs" at great length. Unfortunately Mr. Haun can remember only a few of the ballads. In addition to the one printed here he knows not unusual versions of "The Elfin Knight" (Child 2), "Young Hunting" (Child 68), and "Bonny Barbara Allen" (Child 84). He can recall fragments of one or two others among them "A Paper of Pins."

¹⁸ Quoted from a letter written to me by Mr. Haun and dated Philadelphia, Pa., October 9, 1949.

and its repetition of the opening stanza at the end. But, the text would not really warrant publication at this late date¹⁹ had not Mr. Haun also recorded for me his concept of the story of the song as well as the development of this particular variant with respect to certain abbreviations and modifications subconsciously made by him. However, with such background commentary, Mr. Haun's "The Drowsy Sleeper" serves admirably to show the process of story-variation in action. Thus, let us now study it in relation to the whole problem.

H. M. Belden, in his *Missouri Folk Songs*, summarizes the history of "The Drowsy Sleeper" as follows:

... The kernel of it is a dialog between a lover and his mistress at the latter's window; characteristic lines are "Awake, awake, you drowsy sleeper" and "Who is that at my bedroom window?" He bids her ask first her father and then her mother to consent to their love; to both requests she replies that it will be unavailing, adding in many texts what looks like an implication that he has been making love to another; and he departs disconsolate. That is the general plan; but it is subject to a great variety of modification, and in America has rather frequently drawn on "The Silver Dagger" for a conclusion. Pitts, Such, and Catnach all have nineteenth century stall prints of it. In the Such and Catnach prints it is developed into a ballad of a cruel father threatening impressment or transportation to the lover; the Pitts print is a seduction piece of a fairly familiar pattern in which the woman admits her lover and after he has had his will of her asks him to marry her and gets a jeering denial. Somewhat nearer to the American songs is the Scotch "I will put my ship in order" (William Christie, *Traditional Ballad Airs*, Edinburgh, 1876-81, I, 224-5; John Ord, "The Bothy Songs and Ballads," Paisley: Gardner, 1930, 318-9). In Christie's text there is a father and step-mother, and the latter seems to mislead the lover by speaking in the girl's place somewhat as in "The Lass of Roch Royal," so that the lover departs — or, rather, starts to do so, for the girl calls him back and all ends happily. In Ord's text the lover is really gone, and the girl drowns herself. (Ord, 89, has another piece with a like setting and dialog but ending happily with the lover's admission.) Earlier British broadside texts are printed and discussed by Ebsworth in *Roxburghe Ballads*, VI, 193-215.²⁰

In light of this history of the song it becomes evident that Mr. Haun's text follows a not unusual American pattern. The lover comes to the window, bids the girl to ask her father for permission to marry him, and elopement is suggested if the answer should be no. Moreover, the contact with "The Silver

¹⁹ The song is an extremely common one in America, as can be seen from consultation of the bibliography cited in Footnote 16. It seems to me there is already too much publication of material that is simply repetitious.

²⁰ Belden, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

Dagger" becomes quite clear in the closing stanzas when the girl stabs herself with her father's dagger and her lover, it appears, follows suit.

It is, therefore, somewhat surprising and particularly significant to learn the concept of the story as held by Mr. Haun, who does not know the traditional tale and who has had only his own experience and imagination to go on in constructing the background of the events in his variant of the song. He writes:

I do not remember what my impressions of the ballad were when I first heard it, for I probably heard it first before I could speak! Mrs. Mary Lou Miller, "Grandma Miller" we called her, sung it dozens of times in my presence when I was a child, and I loved the melody deeply before I was aware of the significance of the words.

"The Drowsy Sleeper," or "Sleepers," (I don't remember which exactly) was my favorite, or "favo-right," as she would have said. There were other verses than those I remember, concerned with a mother, but how they fit in I do not know, for I have not been able to recall them for fifteen years or more. (Grandma died in 1933.) When as a child I heard her sing the ballad, I frequently cried. Even before I realized that the story was concerned with lovers, one of whom was killed and the other of whom was a suicide, it seemed most insupportably sad, for Grandma's reading of it was wild, ironical, and bitter, the voice with a cutting edge I have not yet forgot. Then when I realized what it was all about, the pathos was to a proportionate degree increased.

I began to think of it as a story with three characters, as I grew to understand it, and I think I must have forgot the other part about the mother *et al.*, because I could not make these elements fit my conception of the basic story. They seemed, the mother and the other sections I have forgot, simply to be *in the way*, and I just stopped singing about them, even when I was only singing to myself. My cessation can hardly be classified as a self-conscious literary effort, for I could not have been more than eleven or twelve at the time this process was going forward. That is: a girl and a boy wanted to be married. The boy knew that the girl's father opposed the marriage, and he prepared to flee the country with her if they couldn't obtain the paternal consent. He sent his girl to ask her father once more, and the father killed his daughter rather than let her marry the boy. When she returned to her lover to die, he killed himself rather than live without her. I couldn't see how any of the other material was important; it just held up what had to happen, so I dropped it.

Sometime later, when I was growing up, I began to realize that, in the story as I had set it up, the violence of the father's opposition could only have resulted from sexual promptings. So, I had a story about incest, or at least, one in which the father cherished morbid longings for his daughter to such an extent that he killed her rather than let another man have her. The verse and its variant which frame the poem then take on an irony which is most poignant, and it was easy to understand why wise old Grandma, when she had concluded the ballad, would always after a moment sigh, shake her head and mutter, "Lordy me, have mercy on all of them."

I still hold this conception which I worked out as a lad; it seems adequate and I see no reason to change it; it gets deeper and acquires more significance as it goes along. Whenever I sing it, as I do from time to time when I can find someone worth hearing it. . . I sing it under these terms outlined here.²¹

From the letter quoted above it is evident that the song as Mrs. Miller sang it was closer to the more complete variants of this version of the ballad and included the lover's request that the girl ask her mother, as well as her father, for permission to marry. From inspection of similar texts, such as the Belden G. version,²² it is simple enough to conjecture the approximate nature of the missing lines. They probably ran something like this,

Oh Mary, Mary tell your mother
That you would wed this night with me.
If she says no, come back at morning.
We'll sail across the sea.

Oh love, my mother passed her word,
As she lay on her bed at rest.
And in her hand she holds a letter
To show me the man I should love best.

Possibly, even the scenes from "The Silver Dagger" were described more vividly. Whatever the case, it was through the wording of the suicide scenes that Mr. Haun, as a boy, was led to his interpretation of the story.

Oh love, my father passed his word,
As he lay on his bed at rest.
And in his hand he held a dagger
Which I hold now within my breast.

To a person who does not know "The Silver Dagger" and its corrupting influence on "The Drowsy Sleeper" it is not necessarily clear that the girl has used her father's dagger to kill herself. Mr. Haun interpreted these lines to mean the father had killed the girl. This interpretation is, of course, not startling in view of our four-point pattern of ballad-story variation: vagueness caused by compression leading to misunderstanding. Let us note, however, how the result-

²¹ Quoted from Mr. Haun's letter of October 9, 1949. See Footnote 18.

²² Belden, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

ing misunderstanding has led to a complete change in the story behind the song as this one singer interprets it.

Mr. Haun, as he explained, soon began to see the song as a story in which the request for the mother's permission was an unimportant detail in view of the fact, as he interpreted it, the father had killed the girl. Consequently, he omitted these stanzas and eventually forgot them. This misconception further led Mr. Haun to believe that incest²³ or the desire for incest existed between the father and the girl. To my knowledge, this concept of a fixation is totally foreign to "The Drowsy Sleeper" — not being present in any of the printed or oral texts. Yet, when inserted in a variant such as Mr. Haun's is perfectly consistent and appropriate. In addition, it accomplishes the second and third steps of the four-point pattern.

Then, it becomes immediately evident that once this concept of incest can be read into "The Drowsy Sleeper" other singers may, either by direct statements of a man like Mr. Haun or by a similar interpretation of the text, be led to sing the ballad as a family fixation tale. Such a change would strongly influence the forces of variation that play on the song, governing what other ballads it might become confused with in subsequent oral tradition, what cliches might be used to "fill" it, what local events might be associated with it, etc., so that the fourth step in the pattern would soon be completed.

Mr. Haun's "The Drowsy Sleeper," can thus be seen as a sort of "microcosmic" example of what takes place during the whole evolutionary process of narrative-song variation. When its weight of evidence is added to the indicative examples presented earlier, the four-points: misunderstanding, adaption, omission, and modification come into sharp focus and the way of the ballad story seems established and clear. Whether or not it is will depend upon future scholarship.

Denison University

²³ Exactly where Mr. Haun's concept of incest originated, whether it be the result of his reading, knowledge of some local event, or what-not, seems to me to be completely irrelevant.

FOLKLORE INVADES THE COMIC STRIPS

by

Paul G. Brewster

During the past several years, folklore heroes and folklore themes have become increasingly popular as subjects both of the comic strips and of more serious art as well. Several outstanding exponents of the latter have recognized the suitability as art subjects of such folk figures as Paul Bunyan, Mike Fink, Feboldson, Old Stormalong, Pecos Bill, Joe Magarac, and other "tall tale" heroes. On the other hand, the comic strip artists appear to have a decided preference for the less spectacular, though no less interesting, character creations of the folk mind and for themes and incidents having their origin in folklore.

The talking bird which plays so prominent a role in *Tiny Tim*, for example, has a long and distinguished ancestry in folk literature. Birds that have the power of speech are to be found in tales from India, Russia, Germany, Italy, France, China, Arabia, the Scandinavian countries, and many others. Talking birds figure also in stories recorded among the Zuñi and other American Indian tribes. In all folk tales, whatever their source, the usual function of the bird is to warn of danger, to learn and report necessary information, to give helpful advice, or to transport the hero or the heroine to safety. Best known perhaps is the story of the girl who, sent by her wicked stepmother to bring back water in a sieve, succeeds in doing so with the aid of a bird which counsels her to daub the bottom with clay and moss. The talking bird appears also, though less frequently, in traditional balladry.

The Schmoo, that lovable little creature that lays eggs and produces creamery butter and Grade-A milk, also belongs to folklore. There is at least a spiritual affinity between him and his illustrious predecessors, the donkey which voids gold pieces for his rightful owner but pays a scurvy trick on the innkeeper who steals him, and the goose that lays the golden egg. Similar feats are occasionally ascribed also to other animals.

Magical transformation, one of the most common motifs in folklore, is particularly prominent in the comics. It is perhaps best illustrated in two strips, one treating of the exploits of Clark (Superman) Kent and the other of the adventures of *Tiny Tim*. In the case of the former, as the reader will recall, the transformation is effected by the hero's changing his apparel; in the latter it is brought about by the uttering of the magic word. Magic garments are, of course, frequently encountered in folk tales. The donning of them confers invisibility, renders the wearer invulnerable, guarantees the granting of wishes, transports

the wearer through the air and vastly increases his powers (as in Superman). Characters possessing the ability to increase or to decrease their size at will are common to the folklore of most countries. However, it should be added that this ability is usually restricted to supernatural beings. One remembers, for example, the devil who is persuaded by the smith to crawl into the former's steel mesh purse and search for weak links and then, fast locked in the purse, is beaten on the smith's anvil. In much the same way, genii were sometimes cajoled into becoming small enough to enter bottles, which were then tightly sealed. Upon the opening of the bottle by some unlucky finder the prisoner immediately resumed his former size.

Transformation appears also in a recent (February 26, 1950) episode of *Tillie the Toiler*. Tillie's current boy friend, Handsome Herman, has embarked upon a wrestling career and matches his strength and skill against opponents glorying in such fear-inspiring professional names as the Werewolf, the Ghoul, etc. Tillie falls asleep and dreams that while Herman is in the ring with the firstnamed wrestler, the latter actually turns into a werewolf, then into an octopus, and finally into a fire-breathing dragon. Here we find several folklore elements in combination. First, there is the werewolf superstition, which is worldwide and of extreme antiquity. Second, there is the fire-breathing dragon, who appears countless times in folk tale, ballad, and romance. And third, there is the *series* of transformations, which takes us back to Proteus of classical mythology. This repeated transformation motif has been found in the folklore of Greece, Persia, India, Turkey, China, Ireland, and many other countries. It is of frequent occurrence also in African, American Indian, and Indonesian tales. A typical prose version is the Norwegian "Farmer Weathersky," in which the hero changes successively into a fish, a dove, and a gold ring, while the magician pursues him in the form of a pike, a hawk, and a cock. While the magician is scratching for the ring in the ashes into which it has supposedly fallen, the hero changes from ring to fox and bites off the cock's head. A similar transformation combat occurs in an old Scottish ballad "The Twa Magicians."

Not long ago, the irrepressible Hans and Fritz, of *The Katzenjammer Kids*, were trying their hands at a bit of image magic of the "spite doll" variety. *Envoutement*, or image magic, is based upon the belief that the piercing or burning of a doll dressed to represent the maker's enemy will result in the latter's suffering and even in his death. It has been practised among all peoples from a very remote time and, it may be added, still has its adherents and practitioners even in our twentieth century. We know, for example, that it is still being employed by followers of voodoo and also by members of other cults no less unsavory but less widely publicized.

One of the characters in Hal Foster's fine strip *Prince Valiant* is an apprentice

to Merlin the magician, and frequently attempts to duplicate his master's feats, usually with disastrous results. He, too, is straight out of folklore, the only difference between him and his prototype being that the latter occasionally succeeds in outdoing his master. The standard folk tale version bears the title "The Magician's Apprentice."

The magic food of folklore, the eating of which endows the hero with super-human strength in the twinkling of an eye, is most closely approximated by Popeye's spinach and, more recently, by a popular breakfast cereal for which Li'l Abner is just now acting as demonstrator and press agent.

In a recent episode of Walt Disney's Uncle Remus strip, Brer Rabbit is shown tricking Brer Weasel by means of a "doodlebug," a forked apparatus supposed to locate hidden treasure by dipping or by making a sound when the holder walks over the spot where the treasurer is buried. Observing Brer Weasel watching him, Brer Rabbit hurriedly makes a "doodlebug" and pretends to have located something valuable in the ground. He asks the former to hold the "doodlebug" while he goes for shovels and wagons to remove the treasure, and so makes his escape. The real folk method of locating buried treasure (more often it is a vein of water which is being sought) is to use a forked stick, usually a switch from a willow or a peach tree. This method is still believed in and practised today.

On the whole, Mandrake the Magician is too fantastic to be called folklore, based as it is almost wholly upon the hero's powers of hypnosis. However, there are occasional folklore elements. A short time ago, for instance, Mandrake, Narda, and Lothar were on the Road of Seven Perils. The road beset with dangers is a commonplace in folklore as is also the formulistic number seven. Among the perils encountered were twin giants, who were of course conquered by Lothar, though not without some hypnotic assistance from Mandrake.

In recent episodes of the comic strip Wild Rose, old Granny Grimes tries by means of a love potion to secure a husband for Elmira, a lovesick old maid. Like the use of image magic, the employing of love potions is of great antiquity and has persisted down to the present day. The motif occurs in the story of Tristan and Isolt, the romance of Sir Tristrem, one text of the traditional ballad titled "The Outlaw Murray," and a number of folk tales.

If Li'l Abner's falling in love with the picture of a feminine knee seems odd, what is one to say regarding the infatuation of a hero who finds a long hair floating downstream toward him, falls in love with the unknown owner, and sets out to find and marry her? This incident appears in a folk tale from India and may be present in others as well.

There are also parallels to the malignant glare of Evil Eye Fleagle, who not long ago was putting the quarter-, the half-, the full-strength, and the double

whammy on Li'l Abner in order to cause him to lose the fight with the Brooklyn champion, Noel "Battlin'" McNoodnik. The power of "overlooking" has always been numbered among the attributes of witch and wizard, and the custom of spitting on the breast to avert the evil eye goes back at least as far as Theocritus and probably to an even more remote time. Nor is the evil eye the exclusive property of practitioners of the black art. Some are born with it, are not aware that their glances are regarded as malefic except when they are reminded by the actions of those about them, and certainly do not use their supposed power. Such, for example, was the former King Alfonso of Spain. So great was the noise made by the jangling and clinking of amulets worn by onlookers that at his rare public appearances the voice of His Majesty could scarcely be heard above it.

In the drawing below, which the writer has enlarged from a strip in the *Chicago Tribune* for October 9, 1949, we find the artist utilizing a type of folk tale which differs from those previously mentioned. This type is known to the folklorist as the "noodle" or "numbskull" story and has its modern representative in the "little moron" joke. There are countless stories of this kind, stories in



which the stupid or slow-witted hero performs some utterly ludicrous action and becomes the laughing-stock of his fellows. Many of these jokes are extremely old, and the type is represented in the folklore of practically all peoples.

In some instances, a whole town or community acquires the unenviable reputation of being stupid and such jokes are told of the entire population. For example, many concern the eccentricities of the Gothamites of England, the Boeotians and the citizens of Abdera in Greece, the Schildburgers of Germany, the residents of Belmont in Switzerland, and the natives of Chelm in Poland. Typical of the stories told of their stupidity are the following.

One day twelve men of Gotham went fishing together and were forced to wade far out into the water before they found good holes. When they came to shore, one of them began to fear that some member of the group had drowned. Accordingly, each in turn counted the whole party, but, since he failed to count himself, could make the total only eleven. As they sat weeping for the supposedly drowned comrade, a passerby inquired the reason for their grief. When the matter had been explained to him, he picked up a stout stick and struck the foot of each, bidding them count the cries as he did so. In this way they were convinced of their error and heaped praises upon the traveler for his sagacity. Other stupidities attributed to these and similar groups are the building of a church without windows and then conveying sunshine into it in a wheelbarrow, the drowning of an eel as punishment, the seining of a pond to recover the moon, etc.

An even greater number of stories concern the doings of such individual noodles as the Sicilian Giufà, the Turkish Khoja Nasr-ed-Din, the Norwegian Silly Matt, the French Sieur Gaulard, and Simple Simon. The two which follow are representative and are among the most widely known.

A villager's calf had stuck its head into a pot and could not withdraw it. The owner sent immediately for a friend, noted for his wisdom, to release the poor animal. The friend cut off the calf's head, broke the pot, and then gave the head to the calf's owner, exclaiming, "What will you do when I am dead and gone?" The wife of another noodle had washed his robe and hung it on a tree to dry. That night the husband looked out at a window and mistook the robe for the figure of a man crouching by the tree. He called to his wife to bring his bow and arrows and, taking careful aim, pierced the robe through and through. When he discovered the next morning that it was his own robe he had shot, he exclaimed, "How lucky I am! Had I been in it, I would have killed myself!"

In its simplest form, the noodle story which is the basis of this particular comic strip runs thus. A numbskull working aboard a ship drops the captain's shovel overboard. No whit perturbed, he calls out, "Captain, I dropped your shovel over the side, but I cut a notch on the rail just where it went down and

you can easily find it when we come back." It will be noted that in the comic strip, as well as in the "little moron" form of the story which circulated widely a few years ago, we have not one but *two* noodles.

This little story, with only slight variations, is a part of the folklore of India, of Finland, of Sweden, of Ireland, of Brazil, and of several other countries. It appears also in one of the tricks of Tyl Eulenspiegel, who, when the men of Schoppenstadt sink their beautiful new bell into the sea to save it from being melted to make gun-barrels, cuts a notch in the side of the boat from which it is lowered and assures them that now they can easily find their bell again.

That menace to bean-eaters, Fearless Fosdick, idolized by Li'l Abner and detested by Daisy Mae, is, of course, another noodle. His prototype is the simpleton who, attempting to kill a fly on the baby's face, strikes too hard a blow with his hammer and knocks out the baby's brains.

Folk speech has not been utilized to any great extent. However, it is found in at least three comic strips with which I am acquainted: Barney Google and Snuffy Smith, Li'l Abner, and Buz Sawyer.

Whether the artists who draw our comic strips have turned to folklore research or whether they are merely adopting (and adapting) folk materials which have long been and still are in oral circulation are questions which need not concern us. The interesting thing is that they *have* discovered folklore and, in so doing, have unlocked a storehouse which will furnish subjects for their art and entertainment for their readers for years to come.

Arkadelphia, Arkansas

BOOK REVIEWS

White Magic: An Introduction to the Folklore of Christian Legend, by C. Grant Loomis. The Mediaeval Academy of America, Cambridge, Mass., 1948. viii, 251. \$5.00 (to members of the Academy, \$4.00).

Though there is at present certainly no lack of folklore titles, it is rare that a book so much needed comes to light. No field has been so unworked, both by literary historians and folklorists, as the fields of saints' legends. In English there is still but one satisfactory account of the literary aspect of these legends, Gordon Hall Gerould's *Saints' Legend* (1916). One who rereads that beautifully written book is astonished at the rich array of material still untouched by the scholar. Professor Loomis's book, a worthy complement to Gerould, is the ripe fruit of an exhaustive reading of the *Acta Sanctorum* and its companion collections; it is a tasteful and well-styled classification of the separate motifs with which the biographies of the good men of the medieval church were adorned and transformed to more than human significance. Loomis has traversed ground we cannot all in a short life come to at first-hand. We can use his book at second-hand in a thousand profitable ways, and those of us whose problems demand first-hand study will find accurate references to lead us to the fragment we wish to pursue *in extenso*. That *White Magic* is a fine scholarly tool is patent enough; what is more attractive is that it is a delightful book to read, filled with literary magic, however our various preoccupations may lead us to quarrel with Loomis's view of the dichotomies of magic and religion, magic and science, magic and rationalism, and magic and naturalism. On the showing of Gerould, Loomis, and Helen Waddell, we might almost conclude with the generalization that concern with the magic of the saints leads to magic of style. The Mediaeval Academy deserves credit for its attempt with this book to extend its audience beyond its expert membership.

By concentrating on classification Loomis escapes the genetic pitfalls which lured Saintyves and other products of nineteenth-century positivistic reduction. Justifiably he says "The records of Christianity preserve a storehouse of traditions and motives which are infinitely older than the religion itself." But he has wisely avoided as an historical error the narrow view which converted this obvious fact into a negation of the mind and art of fifteen hundred years of the world's history, confused theological assumption with popular lore, and ignored the magnificent discipline which screened truth from fiction during centuries of *advocatus diaboli* and a tradition of scholarship climaxed by Alban Butler, the Bollandists, and Hippolyte Delahaye. Whatever our present attitude towards the Christian view of the cosmos, we cannot justly charge that the medieval

church ignored any major aspect of that cosmos. Since popular lore surges up from deep-seated human needs, universality and catholicity demand its absorption in the hierarchy. Myth does not die with pagan gods, or imagination with pagan heroes. But its survival means different things to Augustine, Aquinas, a medieval peasant, a skilled writer like Bede and a propagandist like Gregory the Great.¹ The genetic studies of our forebears often obscured the reality of these various stages of belief. A frank labelling of folklore in saints' legends as folklore, rather than as the detritus of myth, is necessary to counter the impugners of medieval reason. Loomis has provided us with that weapon by holding himself to the method of classification, and by excluding healing miracles. He has kept to his task by refusing to clutter up the picture with hundreds of parallels from pagan folktale and legend, from romance and literature apart from the Christian legends themselves. That he is not unaware of the genetic problem is shown by his little apologue of Buddha as a Christian saint. His confining himself to that one composite version protects him from unfortunate implications.

Many of us, with differing objectives in view, may wish to draw our own conclusions. In Loomis's phrase the neglected field of white magic differs from black magic only in its intent. "The wand [of magic or science] may be waved for a kindly purpose, or the button may be pushed by a single evil will to put an end to all the attainments and beliefs of human speculation." "Magic is a practise which seeks to turn events or to control nature in an unnatural and unexpected fashion. Magic implies the operation of forces beyond the normal sequences of opinion."² The diversified motifs of saints' legend, therefore, deal with surprises that seem unnatural to us. What is unnatural to us may differ greatly from what was unnatural to either informed cleric or layman in a period before the dawn of organized scientific experiment and modern physical abstraction: it may differ also from the view of physicists a hundred years hence. An Irish bull which Loomis used to tell privately of the Irish saint who swam the Irish channel with his head in his teeth (one misses it in the book) is unnatural in any age; its true domain is humor. The seventy-four saints who carry their heads in a slightly less bizarre fashion, in their hands or under their arms (93),

¹ See Loomis, "The Miracle Traditions of the Venerable Bede," *Speculum*, XXI (1946), 404-418.

² This contrasts with the view of Pico della Mirandola (Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller et al., *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, University of Chicago Press, 1948, pp. 246-247): "Magic has two forms, one of which depends entirely on the work and authority of demons, a thing to be abhorred, so help me the God of truth, and a monstrous thing. The other, when it is rightly pursued, is nothing else than the utter perfection of natural philosophy."

are natural enough, though surprising, no doubt, to the medieval peasant who misinterpreted the symbolism of the stained-glass windows. It is the misconception which would be unnatural to the intelligent Catholic or to the original conceivers of the icon.

Much, in fact, of what is here called magic, might be better labelled symbolism. The Star in the East needs no scientific explanation, whatever Velikowsky (in a current series of *Harper's Magazine* articles) or Ignatius Donnelly, whose *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World* has just reappeared with imposing apparatus, might say. The Star rose from the fact that the episode in the Manger had meaning to Jew and Gentile, to shepherd and wise man alike. So, too, much of what seems miraculous in the later Christian legend. Only to literal-minded people (of whom of course there are a great many in any age) would the vision of Francis of Sens' father (19), who saw his wife "give birth to a lily whose roots were put into the earth" which grew and produced "bountiful blossoms," be taken literally. Surely we may class among symbols for the initiate the bees which swarmed about the mouths of Ambrose and Isidore as they lay in their cradles (22), the appearance of a dove at baptism and at death (23, 60), the milky-white, wine-red and oily breaths of Tigernach (25), the oil which flows from the bones of martyrs (43), the odor of roses and lilies which accompanies virgins and martyrs (54-55), the fights with dragons (65), and the miraculous growth of flowers, like those which the grave of a fool who could say nothing but "Ave Maria" gave birth to, inscribed with these words in letters of gold (95). Loomis rightly sees that miscegenation in Thomas Becket's parents may be a symbolic reflex of his two natures as chancellor and archbishop (117); the learned nature of his biographers warrants that interpretation. Another legend, which Loomis calls "less miraculous than touching," demonstrates the same critical principle:

When Machutus was working in his vineyard, he put his hood upon the vine. After his labors, he returned for his garment and found that a bird had laid her eggs in the peak of the hood. He left his hood until the young had flown away. His hood was completely uninjured during the time it was occupied (68).

The center, in other words, of many legends is feeling rather than reason or scientific observation of the external world. Hence the definition of these legends is not always based on the dichotomy between nature and its violation.

But if we sought the source of all these legends in symbolism we would go as wrong as if we sought it in the folk's misinterpretation of natural phenomena. Many of the motifs are age-old fictions without original purpose except entertainment and surprise; they therefore find their parallels in literature. One of

the joys of reading this book is the shock of recognition of motif after motif that we have sought in other genres because of the frightening bulk of the *Acta Sanctorum*. Celtic myth has marvellous apples like the seven which appeared in Laisrén's mother's dream (19); the columns of fire which come from saints (21) come also from royalty, as in the Middle English *Havelok*; Fancee's oxen (37) would not be out of place in Paul Bunyan stories or *The Droichis Part of the Play* attributed to William Dunbar; Pauphilet has shown the connection of submerged cities (41) with the Grail story; the terrible horseman of Celtic and Germanic ghost-lore turns up as St. Gwynllyw (46); miraculous adhesions remind us (55) of the humorous *fabliau* *The Tale of the Basyn*; helpful lions (59) recall Yvain³ and helpful spiders (66) Robert Bruce. In an Ethiopic legend of Raphael the bonfire built on the back of a whale in the *Bestiary* becomes a church (70). Caedmon's inspiration as an author has many parallels (72). We might remind Professor Loomis that the devil, whose colors he describes (74), is also a green yeoman in Chaucer's *Friar's Tale*. The dialogue combats with the devil (76) have many echoes in Byzantine and Slavic literature, and naturally remind folklorists of the first three Child ballads. Parthenius, as well as Luther, threw an ink-bottle at the devil (76). The woman who conceals her children from the Virgin and has them turned into goats (80) is straight out of the complex of Grimm *märchen* 180, *Die ungleichen Kinder Evas*. Cliffs open for Barbara (89) as they do for the Pied Piper. Fechin and others move great weights (92) as if they were Merlin Ambrosius. Loomis gives many parallels to the flowering staff of *Tannhäuser* (94). The romantic and literary kernel of medieval tragedy, fall from high place, is not absent from legend (112). Kentigern has a Ring of Polycrates (121). Melor like the Celtic Nuada has a silver hand; he goes Nuada one better with a brazen foot (125). The life-token of Meleager has had a long life in Christian legend (125).

None will deny that these motifs are folkloristic in the sense that they are worldwide, traditional, transmitted at times by oral lore, diffused from centers, and often independent in origin. Their vitality in literature does not impugn them as folklore, since their life in letters is parallel to their life in speech. There has never been a time when the folklorist could confine his sights to oral lore. Individual genetic studies will have to take count of the various levels on which these motifs existed. On the whole the legend proper was a literary creation, a judgment sufficiently indicated by its quick death at the time of the reformation. Loomis briefly demonstrates the survival of the motifs apart from the *genre*. He places this problem in critical focus when he notes that the high

³ For the interpretation of legends and Arthurian romance see Loomis, "King Arthur and the Saints," *Speculum*, VIII (1933), 478-482.

ethical purpose of the legend gives place to a lower use of the motifs — in the American tall tale, for instance: "Just as the *motifs* of the courtly romances were written originally for the needs of a rather naïve nobility, but in later times came to be the property of ordinary people in folk-books and penny sheets, so, also, the legend motives continue to be told in a noisy and jocular vein." It is as false to determine their worth by their ending as by their beginning; there is a teleological as well as a genetic fallacy.

Loomis's great gift to us, then, is the skilful presentation and classification of a wealth of material buried in ground most of us are not likely to plow systematically. His categories are probably the better in that they are large and general, rather than detailed in analysis: the Wonder Child, the Four Elements, Animals, Power over Matter, Transportation, Miraculous Growth, Taboos and Punishments, and the like. We may hope that one of Stith Thompson's associates will immediately fit the book into his system, and at the same time agree that conformity to that system would have destroyed the charm and the impact of Loomis's book. What reductions of the horizon we find in the book are intentional, and there is every evidence that Loomis knows what he is reducing from and why. The result is a book of taste, economy, pointed objective, variety, humor, and intelligent juxtaposition. Any folklorist who fails to read it with care will be missing great profit and great pleasure.

Francis Lee Utley

The Ohio State University

A Treasury of Folk Songs, edited by Sylvia and John Kolb. Bantam Books, N. Y., 1948. xv, 240. \$25.

It was bound to happen that one of the publishers of quarter books would bring out a "treasury of folk songs." Fortunately, when it came, it was a good one. Here are ninety American songs, under these headings: Ballads and story songs, True loves and false lovers, Tintypes and frame-ups, "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," Songs in the saddle, Of sailing ships and sailors, The comic section, Lonesome and blue, Lullabies and make-believe, Balance all and swing your partners, Old songs in the new world, Hymns and hallelujahs. Not all are native songs; some are of British origin, a few in foreign tongues, and a few in dialect.

The individual selections are quite uniformly good ones, and the whole collection covers a broad range of the most common and interesting varieties. Many of the pieces are those popularized over the various sound-producing machines by men like Ives and Dyer-Bennett, in fact a list of records is given for sixty-two of the songs. The word "folk" is taken in its looser connotation to include

the shadings from "traditional" to "popular," including a number individually composed by Woody Guthrie ("Pretty Boy Floyd," "Union Maid"), Earl Robinson-Alfred Hayes ("Joe Hill"), and others more or less anonymous.

The editorial practices may be judged by the editors' remarks: "We chose the most melodious airs and the most colorful verses we knew." This is not the occasion to discuss the merits of edited versions for popular consumption. The practice is a hoary one, and this reviewer is not offended by a lack of *verbatim* fidelity to authentic recordings, nor by the absence of collecting data. The sources of thirty-odd pieces are listed in the "permissions": some from scholarly collections, some from popular, and a number from the "People's Songs" group (but unlike *The People's Song Book*, 1948, this is primarily concerned with good songs and not with partisanship or propaganda); a few more are mentioned in headnotes; the rest are unaccounted for (and might be commercial recordings). A check with some of the announced published sources reveals that the texts of the latter are not always exactly followed. Stanzas are sometimes omitted, variant lines introduced, and tunes altered in key, rhythm, or individual notes and phrases. Just what are the principles of alteration in these particular cases, it is hard to make out; for the most part there seem to be no willful motives of "improvement" or "popularization" (except in slight simplification of tunes), but rather a casualness in dealing with variant details.

On the whole, I think the editors have done their editing well enough, choosing their texts with taste and a fidelity to the spirit if not the letter of the songs themselves, even while making omissions to avoid prolixity and repetition, or perhaps while pointing up a phrase here and there (or admitting texts which have been so treated). The result is a neater and "smoother" set of texts than one finds in a comparable number of literal transcriptions, but the songs are not manhandled, even if not presented *in propria persona*. The tunes are good ones, transcribed with an ear also cocked for smoothness and for ease of singing by persons unfamiliar with the idiom of "folk" (though with "popular") tunes, which are of course most difficult to catch in print. Simplicity and directness of singing are encouraged by the practice of printing tunes without any accompaniment except suggested chords, and the latter are sparing and appropriate.

The introduction naturally is enthusiastic about folk songs and laments the fact that Americans have fallen into the habit of letting their music be made for them, an inertia which this collection may help to overcome — it may send the reader to pick out the tunes, or to look into the list of "100 helpful books," or it may just send him to the record shop. The brief remarks introducing each section and song are casually informative and pleasantly descriptive without being coy, and are quite free from nauseous cant about the little people. Taken all in all this is the best quarter's worth of songs I know of and, for popular

use, better than a number of more expensive volumes by better-known editors. I only wish the machine age would produce a more durable cheap binding.¹

Branford P. Millar

Michigan State College

My Songs: Aframerican Religious Folk Songs Arranged and Interpreted, by Roland Hayes. Atlantic-Little, Brown, Boston, 1948. x, 129. \$3.00.

Three Spirituals from Earth to Heaven, by Allan Rohan Crite. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1948. 162. \$3.95.

These two books on the Negro Spirituals, published at about the same time, are in many ways as different as two volumes on the same subject could be. *My Songs* is made up of three "panels" of ten Spirituals each, with settings and comments by Roland Hayes, all ready to slip into the repertoire of any soloist. Crite's book, on the other hand, is a bound album of pen-and-brush drawings which attempt to interpret pictorially the emotions engendered by three well known Spirituals: "Nobody Knows the Trouble I See," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," and "Heaven."

Hayes' arrangements of the thirty Spirituals are beautifully done, and his comments, which are partly autobiographical anecdotes and partly directions for interpreting the songs, add much to the reader's understanding of this musical material. Hayes is, in a sense, a competent folklorist as well as a superb interpreter of Negro songs, for he not only gives a great deal of "ethnographic" background for each of the Spirituals of his selection but also concerns himself both with the Biblical derivations of the texts and with the elements of West African rhythm and melody that have entered into the formulation of the tunes. His three "panels" deal with *Events of the Old Testament*, *Abstractions from the Teachings of Both Old and New Testaments*, and *The Life of Christ*.

While the songs themselves form a splendid and beautiful collection of American Negro Spirituals, the attention of the professional comparative folklorist is likely to be drawn strongly to the introductory sections of the volume, where Hayes presents several parallels, in musical notation, between American Negro folk songs and West African native tunes. Hayes is particularly fitted to make these observations since, after spending his childhood and youth in the South of the United States, he lived for more than a decade with West African

¹ Correspondence with the publishers reveals that this book was put out in a "small experimental edition," and that is why it has not appeared widely on newsstands. They have a limited supply of the title and are not at present planning to reprint. Copies are available direct from Bantam Books, 1107 Broadway, N. Y., at list plus 5c handling.

students in London and Paris and lost no opportunity, while there, to push his musical investigations. He says,

Discussions of the music of African peoples in Africa and Aframerican folk music were mutually enlightening. Aframerican folk songs forgotten since childhood sprang to my lips, and to my astonishment my native African audience joined in the music while expressing what they felt in their own language idiom. This pointed out to me the African characteristics in Aframerican folk songs. . . .

It is interesting to note, in connection with one of the current problems in American folklore, that Hayes, at any rate, feels strongly the liaison between African musical patterns and the American Negro Spirituals.

Three Spirituals from Earth to Heaven, the second of these two books, seems likely to appeal more to the student of aesthetics or the social psychologist than to the professional folklorist. While Roland Hayes has written a polite foreword, it is worth noting that "Heaven," the only one of the three Spirituals Crite has chosen to illustrate which also appears in Hayes' book, differs in text from the version given in *My Songs*. In this reviewer's opinion, the proposition that all three of Crite's selections have been so sung-to-death by high school glee clubs that they have lost much of their original meaning, is at least open to debate.

The seventy-odd unpaginated sketches that make up Crite's album are not outstanding for artistic merit, and the reader is constantly threatened by an irreverent tendency to giggle in the wrong places. The main character in the first two hymns is an old man with overalls, surrounded for the most part by a collection of choir-singers in embroidered robes. An animated Roman chariot, drawn by what appears to be Pegasus without the horse, is the most important prop for the second Spiritual. "Heaven," the third set of illustrations, features a great deal of miscellaneous levitation on the part of the entire cast and contains, in connection with the second verse, "a short history of the harp, from the simple trigon to the seven-pedal modern instrument." All males in the book have straight hair and crew-cuts; all female, long and wavy fair — as if to indicate non-Negroid hair form as one of the essentials of spiritual existence. There is a full-page drawing for each line of each of the Spirituals, with little "transitional" sketches on the even-numbered sides of the leaves, and it may be that one of the reasons the drawings seem to lack message is just that there are too many of them. Or it may be that, despite their comparative triteness, the three Spirituals are themselves so powerful that the best of illustrations would be mere impedimenta.

Richard A. Waterman

Northwestern University

Man and His Works. The Science of Cultural Anthropology, by Melville J. Herskovits. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1948. xviii, 678. \$5.00 (text edition).

Herskovits' *Man and His Works* is an outstanding comprehensive resume of cultural anthropology, well planned and well written, and admirably provided with selected bibliographies, numerous plates and line drawings, and a detailed index. The work as a whole is divided into eight parts: I Introductory, II The Nature of Culture, III The Materials of Culture, IV The Structure of Culture, V The Aspects of Culture, VI Cultural Dynamics, VII Cultural Variation, VIII Summary. Only under III The Materials of Culture, are man's ancestors, prehistory, and races treated, in three chapters which total a scant sixty pages of text; the emphasis of the book, as the subtitle and divisional headings indicate, is from first to last almost exclusively upon cultural anthropology.

Of particular and immediate concern to folklorists are five of the twelve chapters in section V The Aspects of Culture. These five chapters treat of Religion: the Problem of Man and the Universe, Religion: the Control of the Universe, The Aesthetic Drive: Graphic and Plastic Arts, Folklore, and Drama and Music. In the opening paragraph of his twelve-page chapter on folklore Herskovits reiterates the definition of folklore first enunciated by him in his American Folklore Society presidential address of 1945 ("Folklore After a Hundred Years: A Problem in Redefinition," *JAFL*, LIX [1946], pp. 89-100), namely that "folklore . . . consists of . . . myths, tales, proverbs, riddles, and verse, together with music" (p. 414), but he applies this definition in his book only to non-literate cultures (p. 414). Furthermore, in section three of the chapter on folklore Herskovits admits that his definition of folklore "as the literary arts of a culture" departs somewhat "from the conventional usage of this term, which, particularly in England, the continent of Europe, and Latin America has tended to hold more closely to the implications of its original statement than in the United States" (p. 421). This matter of defining folklore is clearly as troublesome to Herskovits as it is to many another student of the subject, and one suspects that in *Man and His Works* Herskovits has not said his last word on the matter.

A few minor criticisms of certain statements made in section four of the chapter on folklore might be made. In this concluding section Herskovits characterizes briefly what he refers to as the three major non-literate folklore areas of the world: the Old World (Africa, Europe, and Asia), North and South America, and the South Seas. His statement that "in the Americas, the explanatory tale plays a prominent role" (p. 425) is misleading; explanatory elements

are frequently inserted or added onto North American Indian tales, but the shifting association of particular elements with different tales has been amply demonstrated; explanatory tales *per se* are relatively rare in American Indian mythology. Another statement, that American Indian myths "everywhere show a preoccupation with celestial phenomena," is also questionable; contrast this with a recent observation by Stith Thompson that "The interest of the North American Indians in the stars and other heavenly bodies seems not to be nearly so great as some writers on mythology would have us expect" (*The Folktale*, New York, 1946, p. 312). Finally, raven stories belong to the tribes in the northern third of the North Pacific coast area, and not to "the northwest and California," as Herskovits states (p. 425).

In a book as well produced as is *Man and His Works*, errors in proof reading are rare. One such would, however, bear correction in future printings of this outstanding survey of cultural anthropology. On p. 660 and on successive evenly-numbered pages up to and including p. 672 the running head at the top of these pages should conform to the title for the section and read, "Bibliographies and Index," rather than "Biographies and Index" as it does at present.

Erminie W. Voegelin

Indiana University

The Folk Dance Library, by Anne Schley Duggan, Jeanette Schlottmann and Abbie Rutledge. A. S. Barnes and Co., New York, 1948. Five Volumes: *Folkdances of the United States and Mexico*, 159; *Folkdances of the British Isles*, 110; *Folkdances of European Countries*, 160; *Folkdances of Scandinavia*, 118; *The Teaching of Folkdance*, 116. Each volume, \$3.00.

The Folk Dance Library is intended for the younger dance-minded set. These five volumes are of tremendous importance to high school librarians. Prior to this boys and girls were taught folk dances without having had the benefit of finding the history and social background of these dances in their libraries. Now they need only to seek the attractive volumes by Duggan, Schlottmann and Rutledge, and the dances themselves will take on new meaning for the reader and performer. Each volume contains several white and black, and also colored plates of costumes and most frequent dance poses. These volumes have ample musical references prepared for the piano.

Folkdance as a cultural subject and as a form of motor activity covers the wide range from community recreational planning to classroom teaching at all levels. It was the expressed objective of the authors to present in one collection as many simple and difficult dances as possible and (primarily) to select dances of national characteristics. Various highlights of peoples' customs and tradi-

tions, and descriptive analyses of festivals and holidays, lend color to the work. Most helpful is the attempt to trace the origin of a dance by its title, its basic steps and formations.

The idea of what constitutes folklore seems to be the basis for the authors' examination, and we are duly introduced to legends, songs, and the arts and crafts in conjunction with festivities. Only in such a total picture is it possible to see the importance which the dance itself has held and still holds among the various nations.

This collection does not seek to provide new dance material. As a matter of fact most of the dances have been taught in the classrooms and communities at least half a century. The collection necessitated some discriminative selective method. Considering the abundance of dance materials it is to the credit of the authors that the work has such uniform and at the same time such universal pattern.

In the extensive introduction the terms used are explained, figures and steps are described, body positions and metronome markings are indicated wherever necessary. Those unfamiliar with certain foreign words and their meanings are assisted by special references. For those interested in further study each volume features a bibliography.

Each volume begins with a preface (the volumes are not numbered and need not be), so that the reader who does not purchase the whole set still receives the benefit of the information of the purposes and methodology used by the authors.

The first volume for analysis is *Folkdances of Scandinavia*, which comprises the following countries: Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. While it is perfectly legitimate to treat the Scandinavian countries geographically and historically, and to some extent even politically as one unit, a cultural study necessitates a clearer division of national characteristics than the authors have given. The same observation and reservation holds true with regard to the other volumes.

It is of great importance to the American reader to learn that one of the dances best known to him, namely the "Schottische" is a national dance in all of Scandinavia. Here it suggests itself that an incidental reference to the introduction of the Schottische into America would have been in place.

A very useful feature of the collection is the breakdown of the various forms of dances into rounds, longways and couple dances. A few dances based on dramatization which utilize the pantomime element, as for instance the Norwegian "Chimney Sweep," or the Swedish "Oxendanse," are included.

The *Dances of the British Isles* have been excellently covered. England, Scotland and Ireland are most satisfactorily represented and analyzed. This reviewer is relieved, for the students' sake, to have found in this work an ample

treatment of a subject heretofore unsatisfactorily dispersed among a great many separate volumes. A most important reference concerning the musical accompaniment is this passage: "While a musician is desirable for a dance gathering, if none is present the dance goes on to the singing of the dancers themselves." It should have been pointed out, though, that the oriental contents of the Morris dance are primarily brought out by the use of the bells and the kerchief (formerly a shawl).

It is also evident that the English folk dance technique is more complicated than the Scandinavian. At the same time their play-spirit is quite distinctly apart. The Scandinavian concentrates on the pantomime and male participation, in contrast to the British and Irish who prefer complicated step patterns with a corresponding abundance of dance varieties. The Sword Dance, the Highland Fling, the Hornpipe were originally performed prior or after a battle; today however they are dances for competition, and the laws and regulations for a perfect performance have to be obeyed, otherwise one has to withdraw from participating in said dances.

The next volume centers on the *Dances of the European Countries*. This volume also contains a division of the historical background material. Switzerland and Germany are listed together as the first group; then Russia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Jugoslavia make up the second group; the volume closes with France. What happened to Spain and Italy? These two countries most certainly cannot be omitted with their long and illustrious history of folk dance and lore. It is hoped the authors will come forth with another volume which concentrates on the above mentioned countries, considering also Greece, Bulgaria, Poland and Rumania. However, the countries selected are well represented.

Another volume deals with the *Dances of the United States and Mexico*. It falls into two parts. The authors have pointed out a few basic differences regarding folk festivals and the performance of folk dances in the two countries. Most important of all is that as a nation the U.S.A. has not adhered to a special dance costume for certain occasions, nor to specific dances for particular festivals. On all occasions we dance all the dances we know. (The American Indian and Negro dances are not included in this survey.) As was the case with the Schottische so it would have been interesting to know more about the origin of some dances. Therefore the special introduction to the section of American Square dancing is indeed a welcome innovation and will aid the student of folklore considerably.

The *Dances of Mexico* are of highly diversified backgrounds. The Spanish, the Indian, and finally the North American influence are evident there. The Mexicans, like the Spanish, more often than not, provided their own accompani-

ment while dancing. Be it gourds, heel clicking, fingersnapping or stamping, an outcry, or a song, something always accompanies the dance. The "Chiapanecas" and "La Raspa" have become of late what we call "mixers" and are generally accepted on the ballroom floor of every American social dance gathering.

The variety of the dances selected should create a wonderful response by the folk dancer, since these dances are different from each other in step, figures, and in the traditional quality.

The final volume is concerned with the teaching of folk dance. Definitions and detailed source materials are listed. Much of this material is new to the young teachers or the young reader of folklore. The definition of what constitutes "character" dance is not clear, consequently the student is left confused and must use his own judgment determining which of the dances in this set of five volumes qualify as character dances.

The objectives of folk dance teaching are outlined next. As a special method the creative approach is discussed and good hints may be found there. The range and scope of folkdance activities is pointed out quite elaborately. When we come to the evaluation section of the teaching process, the authors have covered a tremendous field. However the true and false questions for objective testing, seem to this reviewer, to bring all the creative dance experience to naught. A folk dancer's interest is participation, and by continued practice he will progress and win friends, while keeping the tradition of his forefathers alive. Testing in folk dance is a matter of individual preference, but this reviewer is not in favor of such a procedure. This last volume is best placed on the teacher's shelf. The students who have to be tested soon would learn the scheme of such a proposed set-up-test and the material would be obsolete in no time.

An outline for folk festivals and their productions make up the final section of this volume. Organization and leadership are stressed, along with the "spirit of fun and entertainment"; also a complete arrangement of the "American Corn Husking Bee" festival, as well as an "English May Day" and a "Mexican Folk Dance Festival" are described. It appears that in order to have real leadership, ideas and their working schemes should originate from the students' creative imagination, and they would enter thus more readily into the desired "spirit of fun and entertainment."

In closing it should be stated that *The Folk Dance Library* is the best collection of its kind that has come to the attention of this reviewer and without reservation should be considered as indispensable by every student and teacher interested in the realm of folk dance and folk lore.

Juana de Laban

University of Michigan

Lore of the Lumber Camps, edited by Earl C. Beck. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1948. xii, 347. \$3.75.

During the last half of the nineteenth century the spectacular lumbering industry swept over the upper Great Lakes region. It attracted thousands of men from the Maine and Quebec lumber woods and from the areas nearer at hand. A high-gearred major industry mushroomed into existence, and in a few decades produced billions of feet of lumber necessary for the building of homes on the American prairies, a goodly crop of lumber-baron millionaires, some agricultural lands, and more desolation where "crows in flying over carry their own lunches."

Earl C. Beck's *Lore of the Lumber Camps* is a collection of songs and stories that grew out of lumbering in Michigan. It is a revised and enlarged edition of his earlier *Songs of the Michigan Lumberjacks*. It is now the most complete collection of that material available.

The title of the collection is somewhat of a misnomer in that it implies the inclusion of a wider variety of material than the book contains. The volume is focused primarily on the section of Michigan north of the Muskegon and Saginaw valleys — and advisedly so — and is limited mostly to one type of "lore" — songs. Three hundred and twenty-eight of its 342 pages of text are occupied with songs and other verse and the collector's comments, and the remaining fourteen with lumberjack "tall tales." This edition has omitted approximately two dozen of the items in the earlier collection that are least concerned with, and expressive of, the Michigan lumberman's life, and added about forty songs, poems, and tales collected in the intervening years. The new volume is a noticeable improvement over the earlier one, but a still more rigorous exclusion of some of the "composed" verse and songs now included would have materially increased the value of the book.

This collection contains all the old stand-bys and camp favorites: "Michigan-I-O," "A Shantymen's Life," "The Jam on Gerry's Rock," "The Flat River Girl," "Bold Jack Donohue," "Harry Bail," and many others. These songs say nothing of the many fortunes made out of the state's most outstanding resource, but they do present intimately human glimpses of the spectacular and romantic lumbering industry at the peak of its development. The red-sashed French Canadians, the roughnecks from the Maine woods, and the local farmers and frontiersmen made the Michigan forests a lively place. The songs present the rough horse-play, pathos, and frequent tragedy that characterized camp life. They narrate the felling, swamping, skidding, hauling, river driving, and milling of the big trees. They also narrate the brawls and often tawdry and deeply sentimental love affairs that developed when the Jacks made their spring de-

scent upon the well-salooned and red-lighted neighboring communities. Music accompanies or is indicated for about one-fifth of the hundred or more songs included.

The last section of the book, the "Tall Tales from Tall Timber," for best enjoyment should, of course, be read with the woodsman's intonations, dead pan, and significant pauses. The area around Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, where Dr. Beck did much of his collecting, is still good hunting ground for lumbercamp yarns. "Old Jim Vahey" from whom he quotes several, told them for years to any one who would listen, and he always made them good. He couldn't grow pumpkins on his logged-off farm because the land was so rich and the vines grew so fast that the pumpkins were worn out as they dragged along. Paul Bunyan, of course, is the subject of several stories, and not all are in prose. The song, "Round River Drive," tells of Paul's surprise when he and his crew, driving a hard river, passed their own camp several times before they discovered that the river flowed in a circle.

In the introduction to his earlier edition the author states that his aim has not been, "to make a scholarly investigation of the balladry of the Michigan north woods," but "simply to present here . . . the folksongs of the Michigan lumberjacks." He has followed the same aim in this revised edition, and has omitted bibliographical and critical comment in favor of some breezy observations and statements of his sources. Gustave Hildebrand's Paul Bunyan line-drawings add atmosphere to the collection, as do the log-marks (brands in the cow country) that fill out some of the pages below the songs. The format and binding are excellent.

Ivan H. Walton

University of Michigan

Selected Writings of Louise Pound, ed. Lowry C. Wimberly. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1949. xiv, 365. \$5.50.

To turn the pages of this book is to pass in review the many interests of one of the liveliest minds to which students have been exposed in the last fifty years: — interests which include the vagaries of American speech, treated with the thoroughness of a German-trained philologist who at the same time never forgets that in words one has human history; the relation of some of our oldest literature to the most modern subjects of investigation, like dream vocabularies, ideals for research, for the teaching of English, for the position of women in the scholarly world; to say nothing of a constant interest, the exposure of fallacies underlying ballad study.

The bibliography of Miss Pound's writing is largely in the field of articles

and speeches, rather than longer works. In a list of 170 items there are only three books. But the books she has caused to come into being, because of her fifty uninterrupted years in the classroom, are, as she says, her greatest pride. Her audience for the speeches and articles reprinted here is wide and varied,—the National Council of English Teachers, the National Association of Deans of Women, the American Association of University Women, and of course the Modern Language Association and the American Folklore Society. The critical estimates in her reviews of practically every book of or on ballads for the last thirty years (also listed here) have reached an even wider audience.

The present volume draws about forty articles from these various sources, on subjects linguistic, folkloristic, literary, and broadly educational. Here we have "Whitman and Bird Poetry," "Intrusive Nasals in Present Day English," "The American Dialect of Charles Dickens," the famous "Term 'Communal,'" "The Use and Abuse of the Contemporary in the Teaching of English," and various brief notes, mostly philological; — a miscellany indeed, but all stimulating. It was natural that the linguistic studies of her early years should have led her into the paths of dialect, word preservation, word change and word coinage which have put the study of American speech on a new level. With the variety from which to choose a representative selection, it is perhaps natural, if in this reviewer's opinion regrettable, that so few choices deal with balladry, the subject with which her name is so generally associated.

Now that the battle cries of the communalists and the anti-communalists of the 1910's and '20's have died down, one smiles with Miss Pound at her earlier crusading and her efforts to "hurl back, a little harder, the brickbats thrown at her." Now that her refutation of the theory of communal origin of ballads has been so widely accepted, it is strange to confront with her the basic misconceptions still current, as she points out in one of her most recent speeches, "Literary Anthologies and the Ballad" (May all anthologists take her words to heart!). Yet her enormous influence on ballad scholarship is evident everywhere. Surely the scientific scrutiny to which ballad verse, diction, tunes and folklore have been in late years subjected is due largely to the cudgels she wielded so stoutly for the unromantic, unsentimental theory of individual — and probably literate individual — authorship. To have had this sort of study running parallel to the collecting of ballads, particularly in the American field, has been to produce significant changes in the study of ballads.

In simple, emphatic, often distinguished prose she takes issue with the fallacies of the day — "contemporary literature should be substituted for older works," "poetry is dead," "The female intellect is not the match of the male." Along with much valuable generalization runs a rich stream of illustration. She combines the human and the philosophical, and the learned approaches of

a great teacher. If some repetition occurs, as when in two different selections she labors to persuade her hearers about the dating of ballads, it is the incremental repetition of emphasis. The period covered by the selections—1911 to 1948—and the scope of the subject matter, present findings which it is highly valuable to put between the covers of one book. Implicitly, too, the book is valuable, in the presentation of an intellectual vitality which relates the current and the immediate to their roots. The collection is its own comment on a scholar and a teacher, and will serve those who come after most helpfully. It is a record, a prophecy, and a cautionary guide.

Evelyn K. Wells

Wellesley College

With Various Voices: Recordings of North Star Life: 1654-1900, edited by Theodore C. Blegen and Philip D. Jordan. The Itasca Press, Saint Paul, 1949. xxiv, 380. \$5.00.

The quality of a geographical section and of its inhabitants is not easily captured, and must interest the student of American life who is not satisfied with blunt artifacts of historical or cultural information. The editors of *With Various Voices* are especially well-equipped to deal with that of Minnesota. Dean Blegen has, of course, produced distinguished studies in grass roots history, and Professor Jordan has studied the "common man" from many standpoints, including folk-stories, folk-ways, and folk-songs—the latter not only with musical scores but also, one understands, voice and a steel guitar. Their anthology is composed of selections from memoirs, speeches, manuscript materials, newspapers, and even interviews. One wonders, before opening the book, what composite portrait of Minnesota and its people the editors will find to present.

The result of their efforts is absorbing and picturesque, and not wholly as expected. One has a renewed appreciation of the arduous and practical nature of settlement. Violence, business transactions, and treaty-making highlight relations with the Indians. Timber, wheat, apples, and other tangibles of farm and forest are critically discussed along with the day-to-day details of home-building and family life. Blizzards, grasshopper plagues, politics, and trades-unions are described in appropriate periods of the state's history. By 1851, a Rotarian note creeps into an article by "a Minnesota Democrat" who is anxious for the world to know more about "Salubrious Minnesota," and to encourage hotel-building and the exploitation of mineral springs.

The marvel is not that so little relating to what the editors call "things of the spirit" appears in their book, but that, considering the problems raised by the frontier, so much of it transcends necessity. A certain poetry is, of course,

always present in Indian expression, if not in intent. Radisson, in the 1650's, is told of a "great white thing sometimes upon [sic] the water, & came towards the shore, & men in the top of it, and made a noise like a company of swans" (p. 5) — a felicitous reference to what were perhaps Spaniards. Somewhat less evocative is the claim of an Indian, in 1850, to damages for corn said to have been ruined by white excursionists: "True, the corn had been drowned out and washed away by the high water long before the whites landed; but then, the Great Spirit was angry because they had taken those big fire canoes [steam-boats] up the river, and that was why the freshet came, so they ought to pay for the corn" (p. 119).

By 1850, the white man is pretty much in control of the situation, and barely finds time to remember that his ample fields of wheat had only yesterday been "the delightsome land of the Dacotah, the hunting-ground of Wabasha, and the scene of Winona's love and tragical end." There is power in the selections which paint the conquered land and its resources — for instance, the demesne of the lumberjacks, all on a large scale, from giant-sized bunks for tired Paul Bunyans to great log floats: the very stuff of legend. But it is when we come to the aptly-named Charlotte Ouisconsin Van Cleve and her early recollections of Fort Snelling, that the region begins to exude an unmistakably individual and thoroughly human spirit. One can only here refer to her moving soliloquy about "Little Falls" (which became Minnehaha), to other episodes by narrators describing, among other things, how Minneapolis and Duluth got their names; and to note that a regional quality can be clearly discerned in a variety of memoirs from which selections have been culled. More might properly have been done to illustrate the songs and stories which colored the lives of the settlers, or evolved from them. Indeed, one wonders how such seasoned students of the folk as the editors resisted the temptation to include appropriate material. The frontier would have appeared richer and less materialistic for it.

The present reviewer's favorite among all the selections is the account by Levi Thortvedt of his family's settlement on the Red River Trail in the 1860's. His story is told with a narrative gusto and punctuated with explosive ejaculations which have the lift of song and story, even when it is only catfish he is praising. One feels more keenly how much heart and conviction it must have required to master the wild country, and takes almost personal satisfaction in the concluding sentences of Thortvedt's manuscript (p. 303):

Now, when house and stable were built and hay all home and stacked, only common routine business went on day by day. Until, the later part of August, I think it was, that something new happened. It was over at my Uncle Aanon, our next neighbor to the north. It was late in the evening as told by Mrs. Aanon Gunderson . . . they heard voices around the point or

bend of the river and she thought it must be Indians, so she was quick to quench the greased lamp or fire of any kind in the house, in the hopes that they might pass by. But listening with both ears wide open, the voices had turned to singing. They all stood and listened. O, my God, it is a Norwegian song! she said and being sure that it was not a mistake, she ran in the house, lighted the lamp again and when these people come far enough around the bend, they seen the light from the house. They promptly turned in. It was a happy surprise in this wilderness.

Louis Filler

Antioch College

The White Rose Garland of Yorkshire Dialect Verse and Local and Folk-Lore Rhymes, edited by Wilfred J. Halliday and Arthur S. Umpleby. J. M. Dent and Sons, London, 1949. xxiv, 337. 16s.

The editors of *The White Rose Garland* are most suitable persons to have been selected for collecting material for and editing a book of this kind. Both men are well acquainted with dialect and folklore, have collected dialect, lectured on it, written on it, and written it. Dr. Halliday has been editorial secretary of the Yorkshire Dialect Society since 1927, and Mr. Umpleby has been its secretary since 1938.

The authors of the poems range from the anonymous to well-known writers, from the gentry to the peasantry. The biographical section gives information on sixty-five contributors. Among these are many types of persons: the rich and the poor, the highly educated and at least one person who could neither read nor write; there are physicians, ministers, university professors, archaeologists, editors, poets, dramatists, actors, business men, miners, railway engineers, factory workers, and farmers. But whatever their calling, they all have two things in common: a firsthand knowledge of dialect and folklore and a warm interest in these.

The Garland marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Yorkshire Dialect Society (1897), which is still very active. It makes investigations of local dialect, encourages the writing of prose and poetry in dialect, holds meetings, has lectures on dialect, and publishes an excellent journal — *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society*. This anthology was published to give a full representation of Yorkshire verse from the second half of the seventeenth century till the present day. "The primary object of *White Rose Garland* is to present a selection of dialect verses which have value as poetry in their own right, and secondly to set out a collection of local, traditional, folk rhymes which provide the social background which gives meaning and significance to the dialect verse."

A book of real merit will present more than it proposes to, will throw light on other subjects than its purposive subject. This book has much in it that will

be informative and interesting to the interpreter of English literature, the historian, the anthropologist, and the sociologist, as well as to the dialectist. The notes, covering 102 pages, are among the best I have ever read. A folk saying or a belief contained within a few lines may to the uninitiate seem rather meaningless; but when the editors explain the meaning and then cite the use of the saying or belief in the poetry of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, etc., the selection has clear meaning. Frequently a short poem has as its basis a long historical or traditional narrative. Such, for example, are: the five-line poem "Richmond," based on the story of Potter Thompson and the famous sword Excalibur; the three-line poem "Ripon" (place-poem), which explains that the present custom of blowing a horn in Ripon at nine o'clock in five places goes back to the days of Alfred the Great; and "A Wharfedale Lullaby" tells of Henry Lord Clifford (1455?-1523), who became a shepherd and trafficked in the supernatural. Wordsworth makes use of this story in two of his poems: "Brougham Castle" and "The White Doe of Rylstone." The poem also will remind the reader of Arnold's "Scholar-Gypsy."

The book has examples of children's rhymes, singing games, sayings about the weather, birthdays, weddings, lucky and unlucky days, etc.

A legend concerning Apostolic days in the basis of the poem "Semerwater":

Semer water rise, Semer water sink,
And swallow all the town
But this lile house
Where they gave me meat and drink.

The curse here is supposed to have been uttered against all the houses in Rysdale except one. The tradition is reminiscent of the myth of Baucis and Philemon. "The Witch's Curse" presents the ingredients of a witch's broth similar to those in the broth of Medea and of Shakespeare's witches.

The last stanza of the "Cleveland Vessel Cups Song" would serve much better on Christmas-New-Year cards than many verses we now see on these cards:

God bliss t'maister o' this house,
An' t'mistress also,
An' all yer lahtle childeren
That round yer teeable go;
An' all yer kith an' kindered,
That dwell beeath far an' near;
An' Ah wish ya a Merry Kessamas
An' a Happy New Year.

Throughout the book are many pieces having wit and humor. Consider "A West Riding Grace after Meat":

We thank the Lord for what we've getten,
 But if more had been cutten
 Ther' wod more ha' been etten.

The "Beggars' Litany" is doubtless more tragical than witty:
 From Hell, Hull and Halifax, good Lord deliver us.

Two pages of notes tell why Hull and Halifax were sorely dreaded by beggars. Perhaps our imprecation "Go to Halifax" is not a mere euphemism, as some think, but refers to the terrors of the "beheading engine" formerly used at Halifax.

The author of an "Epitaph on a Politician" may not have had in mind some of the satirical epitaphs on physicians in the *Greek Anthology*, but he made a close parallel to these pieces of ancient wit when he wrote:

His clapper's still, his trap is shut,
 He says nowt, false nor clever;
 He's no moor use, nor mischief, but
 His ear's to t'grahnd as ever!

One of the most interesting items in the collection is a list of six sets of sheep-counting numerals from six sections of Yorkshire. These numerals are believed to be survivals of the Celtic language. The numerals from Swaledale run: yahn (1), tayhn (2), tether (3), mether (4), mimph (5), hither (6), lither (7), anver (8) danver (9), dic (10), yahndic (11), tayndic (12), tetherdic (13), metherdic (14), mimphit or mump (15), yahn-a-mimphit (16), tayhn-a-mimphit (17), tether-a-mimphit (18), mether-a-mimphit (19), jigit (20).

The volume is provided with a glossary, bibliography, and indexes of persons, places, first lines, and general matters.

George P. Wilson

The Woman's College of the University of North Carolina

Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend, Vol. I: A-I, edited by Maria Leach. Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1949. x, 531. \$7.50.

Certainly for a field as all-embracing as folklore, a dictionary — if not an encyclopedia — is a great *desideratum*, and here at last we have one which sets out to range over the whole wide expanse and return with a thousand-page digest of it. It is written for the specialist, the transient scholar from other bailiwicks, and the curious layman. Judging from this first of two volumes of folklore, mythology, and legend from "Aa" through "Izanagi," I should say that what

has here been made available may be designated under three headings.

First, there is an accumulation of factual or reportorial material from many sources, both from oral reports and from every level of writing, from the most naive and the most scholarly records. There is much that is difficult to come by, and much that is susceptible to summary and often able to be consumed by many of us only in such a form. There is much that is familiar in one form but less commonly known in other manifestations. There is much that one would want there to be—descriptions of customs, beliefs, rituals, games, musical instruments, dances, ballads, songs, folktales, myths, legends, motives, fairies, heroes, and gods: some confined to narrow regions or particular instances, some widespread and treated historically and comparatively. There is material from all ages of time and parts of the world, and though many specific items will not be found, this is an inescapable condition in a book of this scope; in general the work is quite satisfactorily inclusive and succinct in presentation.

Second, there are a number of survey articles, varying in length from a column or so to twenty pages. There are the following regional surveys: African and New World Negro (by Waterman and Bascom), American (Botkin), Australian aboriginal (Luomala), Basque (MacEdward Leach), Celtic (Loomis), Cheremissian (Balys), Chinese (Jameson), Estonian (Balys), European (Krappe), Finnish (Thompson and Balys), Finno-Ugric (Balys), French (Barbeau), Germanic (Taylor), Indian and Persian (Marian Smith), and Indonesian (Luomala). Most of these are admirably compressed resumes of what is known of the various classes of folklore of these regions, with some history of the development of folkloristic study of the regions and an indication of their special traits and problems. By these articles we are forcefully reminded that the state of knowledge is by no means the same for all regions, as for China and Finland; and there are many valuable indications of gaps even in supposedly well-combed areas.

There are a number of featured survey articles on classes of folklore: the ballad (Leach), dance (Kurath), fairy tale (Thompson), folktale (Thompson), and games (Fried). The first two are particularly full and informative; the second (the longest article in the book) is an extraordinary compendium and classification of a tremendous body of terpsichorean practices. The last article, by contrast, is unusually prolix.

Third, there are articles dealing with the nature, boundaries, subject-matters, methods, and definitions of folklore, as well as brief descriptions of the work of many folklorists. Acculturation, diffusion, comparative method, historic-geographic method and such matters are treated separately and incidentally to particular areas and materials. An article ("folklore and mythology") by the late Alexander Krappe is a masterly survey of the various concepts and "sciences"

of folklore. Not the least interesting are the definitions of folklore by twenty-one contributors (under "folklore"). Here the multiformity of viewpoint among leading specialists leads one to despair of the possibility of definitive orthodoxy. For my own part, I am now ready to let folklore be all things to all men, and if like many others I am skeptical of the value of much that comes to us under the name of folklore, when it passes for scholarship I shall try to judge it for its scholarliness and not for its folkloristicness, if I may employ jargon. These seriously considered definitions together make a strong case for inclusiveness and at the same time for the importance of weighing, evaluating, and comparing widespread evidences from manifold sources, and they indicate how very little one really knows when one's studies are parochial or compartmentalized. They raise fundamental questions, such as whether folklore should be considered primarily as a science *about* a folk or as *lore of* a folk; whether as science it often offers "pretentious explanations of an incomplete logic" or whether as humanism it "meditates on the sorts of gaiety and terror which the peoples of all times and places record" (Jameson) — or, to put it another way, whether it is "associative rather than logical" (Taylor); whether or not it is chiefly verbal; whether "literature" can be left to the folklorist, while the anthropologist and social scientist take over "culture" (compare Bascom, Espinosa, Herskovits, Herzog, Thompson, Voegelin). It is well to have these questions raised, even if they cannot be resolved, and the sophistication sometimes shown in their treatment offers the challenge of highly respectable and rewarding intellectual disciplines.

It may be remarked in passing that the *Dictionary* necessarily reflects and demonstrates the disparate points of view and backgrounds of its contributors. Thus the survey of Germanic folklore is prefaced by a caveat against assuming that specific Germanic qualities can be isolated, and it stresses the increasingly apparent internationality of folklore. This may be contrasted with a preoccupation in American folklore with the indigenously American: "From the cultural point of view, there is not only an American folk but also an American study of the folk and its lore," a folklore often come at from the point of view of the social historian and held to be closer to history — and to folkways, and to print — than to mythology, so that it needs to be extended with "folk-say" (q. v.). This has certainly enlivened socal history, and has emphasized the everyday popular elements — the "living as well as [the] anachronistic phases" — of folklore. But one sometimes feels here a lack of depth- (or breadth-) perception, and a predilection for the superficially quaint and colorful over the folkloristically deep-seated; one suspects a historical reversion to popular antiquities and current oddities; and one may feel uncomfortable in the face of certain statements about the "mythical" character of Davy Crockett. But since

we lack an orthodoxy, heterogeneity in a dictionary may be a virtue, and it is true, as the Preface claims, that "all schools, all methods, all theories" are represented, excepting those of the psychologists.

Such a hoard is bound to be of great use; it is a pity that its possible utility should be limited by the defects it has. These may be described under deficiencies as folklore and as dictionary. In the first category, there are occasional errors in fact or erroneous impressions given by the citation of single instances, although in matters where I am a sufficient judge, these seem to be few. There are shifting levels of expertness, as in the article on design which talks a good deal about design, plan, and pattern in the abstract but tells us little about particular folk arts and crafts. There are self-contradictions, as when amulets are described as primarily preventive and distinguished from talismans which transmit qualities, whereas examples are given of transmissions from animals of positive qualities like strength and industry. There are questionable inferences drawn from bodies of raw materials, such as: "New variants of some of the 305 ballads in his collection have occasionally been discovered, but no new ballads" (under "Child"). There are occasional lapses of perspective, as: "Although it has long been recognized that folklore is a favorite form of amusement, its other functions have usually been disregarded" (under "African folklore"); or the remark about Aarne that his work, with Thompson's revision, "became the [my *italics*] foundation stone for subsequent folklore scholarship in Europe and America," a statement which appears to me oversimplified as to masonry as well as to folklore, especially since Thompson himself in his article on historic-geographic method is careful to point to criticisms and deficiencies of the method. There is a remarkable lapse of taste in admitting a frivolous article on gremlins. There is frequent uninformativeness, as when there are mentioned no English translations of Andersen (*q. v.*) after 1846, though his work was not complete for twenty-five years afterward; or when Halloween is entered merely as "the eve of All Saints Day," though the latter entry includes nothing about the eve; or when the Arabian Nights is given an eight-line entry.

As one uses the dictionary, he notices some rather surprising omissions. Considering the other surveys, it would be reasonable to expect one on Greek folklore, even though, considering the availability of reference works elsewhere, it is defensible generally to treat the ancient Greek sparingly. A casual listing of topics not separately entered reveals the following: agriculture, archeology, Aryan, astronomy, belief, breath, Britain (or Denmark, or Iceland, all presumably felt to be covered sufficiently under "Germanic folklore"), cabalism, ceremony, chapbook, communal, cosmogony, costume, covenant, culture, custom, Egypt, epic, ethnic, ethnography, ethnology, etiology, exemplum, exorcism, family, fertility, folkway, *Gesta Romanorum*, gypsy, healing, and hero. All of these

appear incidentally, many of them very often, and I should think that a dictionary has an obligation to treat in a forthright manner such common terms, premises, and practices. There are, moreover, altogether too many articles on widespread general concepts — such as creation, culture hero, death, and explanatory elements — which are discussed entirely or chiefly from instances of one or two regions, and are thus distorted.

This leads us to a consideration of the faults as dictionary. There is a great scarcity and inconsistency in use of cross-references. Though a separate index volume is announced to be forthcoming, cross-reference still serves a useful purpose and its utilization could be more than a sporadic gesture. Another fault is an editorial laxity about assuring broadness and uniformity of coverage. It is perhaps admissible for the materials of the *Dictionary*, as the preface states, not to be divided into rigid percentages, and for the American Indian and the Old and New World Negro to be given fuller representation because of the great amount of new material and "the growing wave of interest in these peoples." But it is hardly good practice to let them so often provide nearly the sole instances of universal practices, as in the cases I have mentioned. The North and South American experts seem to have been set to adding regional material to many general articles; why were not more of the other experts? One wonders, too, why details from survey articles are not more systematically picked up for brief separate treatment, as is done so well for the ballad and the dance.

But to my mind the greatest sin of all is the paucity of bibliographical references. Most of the survey articles do contain incidental references and short bibliographies; some do not and I can see no reason at all why they shouldn't. Those on European, Germanic, and Finnish folklore, for instance, are crammed not only with information and well-digested theory but also with references, and their utility and authoritativeness are increased enormously thereby. But in another case, seventeen columns on games mentions three books by title. Very few of the brief articles have any specific references to primary sources or secondary discussions. I know nothing more annoying than to run into a bland remark that "Krappe states . . ." (under "Circe"), or that the Tar-Baby story "has been investigated by Espinosa and others" (under "animal tale"). The plain facts are that the lay reader, as well as the student, might wish or need to know more, and that the scholar cannot afford to take anyone's undocumented word, especially where contributors are as often as not unidentified. There is no way I can see in which the "complete bibliography" promised in Volume II can adequately compensate for exact references in their pertinent places. For authoritativeness and utility one can not compare this work with, say, the recently published *Oxford Classical Dictionary* with its careful cross-references and uniform bibliographical citations, as well as its more extensive list of contributors.

and its meticulous editorial supervision. By comparison the present work seems to have been better planned than executed.

In sum, then, I am sure that I, like others, will find myself often referring to this book, with its wealth of data, and as often lamenting its grave shortcomings. In fairness, final reckoning must await the appearance of Volume II and the Index volume, but there is already a good deal of ink, black and red, in the ledger.

Branford P. Millar

Michigan State College

Folk-Songs of Virginia; a Descriptive Index and Classification, by Arthur Kyle Davis, Jr. Duke University Press, Durham, N. C., 1949. xxv, 389. \$4.00.

The first step in the study of folksongs is accurate and complete recording, not only of the music and texts but also other pertinent data, such as the name, address, and cultural background of the singer, the provenience, the date of the recording, and other fairly standard factual details. These must be available if scholarly research is to be done. Early collections of folksongs were often inadequate for study, but most recent collections have approached accurate and complete recording, and many have achieved it, among them *Folk-Songs of Virginia; a Descriptive Index and Classification*.

Folk-Songs of Virginia has made two valuable contributions. The first is that as an index it is a thoroughly prepared record of an extensive collection by Professor Arthur Kyle Davis, Jr., and other members of the Virginia Folklore Society. This volume alone, exclusive of *Traditional Ballads of Virginia*, contains references to 974 songs with 2454 variants. No texts or tunes are published, but for each variant the following data are given: "the local title, the first line, the name and address of the collector, the name and address of the singer, the Virginia county in which the song was sung, the date, the number of stanzas. Where there is music, the fact is stated, with the name of the person who noted the tune. If an item is a phonographic recording, only the type and size of the record is given, with the title and singer of the song on the reverse side of the record. A few significant facts of provenience and the like are occasionally added to the standard data."

Here is an index as it should be prepared. It will be indispensable to many comparative and other folksong studies. Titles are no infallible identification, but with the exception of the Child ballads there is nothing better than giving the title and first lines as we have here. Any one familiar with folksongs will have little or no difficulty in identifying and locating the songs.

But *Folk-Songs of Virginia* is more than a thoroughly adequate index. It is

also a classification, and this is its second valuable contribution. Professor Davis's classification is based on 3179 variants and arrives at such categories or types as Child Ballads, Other Narrative Songs, Humorous Ballads, Married and Single Life, Play Party Songs, Sea Songs, American Historical Songs, etc.

Professor Davis states in his "Introduction" the difficulties and limitations of classifying folksongs, and does not offer the system he presents as a model for all future classifiers. It is, he states, the best for the Virginia collection. I feel that it should be a model for all future classifiers, not one to be followed in every subdivision for all collections, but as a sound guide in its organization and particularly in the discussion of the problems involved and the explanation of the system which is used. Professor Davis's awareness of the problems and his careful presentation of his research and experience make his book an essential guide for any one who is faced with classifying folksongs.

Edwin C. Kirkland

University of Florida

Folk Laughter on the American Frontier, by Mody C. Boatright. Macmillan, New York, 1949. vi, 182. \$3.00.

Mr. Boatright claims that frontier humor expresses a good deal more than boisterous funmaking. It embodies serious ideas and attitudes of the frontier mind, which found their articulation not in literature or art, for obvious reasons, but in humor, an oral, traditional, popular humor that undeniably qualifies as folklore.

The first eight chapters of this well-ordered volume explain the humorous reaction of frontiersmen to the elaborate myths about the backcountry spun by European and Eastern travelers. When they said the frontier crawled with criminals, that its men were barbarians and its women hideous, its land a desert and its wildlife monsters, the frontiersmen agreed, and gave irrefutable examples to illustrate these points. Mr. Boatright contends that the picture thus drawn by gullible travelers and roguish natives is truly a comic myth. He further maintains that this tall lying involved a finely developed skill, making use of plausibility, restraint, inversion and surprise; the tall tale is an art, America's one indigenous art form.

Three provocative chapters deal with the humorous anecdote as employed by backwoods politicians, lawyers and preachers. The first group made fun of their political opponents, the second of ignorant judges and pompous plaintiffs, the third of heathenish laymen. All used the anecdote to drive home a point to their listeners in terms they understood, and usually to satirize a hated enemy, the pretentious, arrogant intruder. In two final essays the author analyzes the

rhetorical devices of frontier humor, and its motivation, which he feels comes not from self-mockery and frustration but from the cockalorum spirit of Manifest Destiny.

In every respect this is a work of high merit. As a semi-anthology it brings together tall tales and jests in a systematic and entertaining way, and as a theoretical study it probes into the American equalitarian spirit which laughs, literally, at smugness, upper-class airs, and the mistaking of the manner for the matter. In giving support to the Turner thesis, the materials of frontier humor take on fresh meaning. There are shrewd judgments all through the book, as when the author says the almanac writers "were not writing about events, but about concepts."

In view of the able studies and collections of native humor made in the past twenty years, it is surprising to find so many important new insights being offered. But Mr. Boatright differs in one large respect from Rourke, Meine, Blair, DeVoto, Hudson, Clark and Loomis; he has worked in the oral as well as the printed literature. The present volume shows the fruit of cultivating both fields, and presents tales personally heard and collected, with those culled from travel narratives, western autobiographies, the Crockett almanacs and similar sources. And knowing the oral tradition at firsthand he can better recognize it in books.

Having said so much I would like to whittle away a little at Mr. Boatright's argument. I don't think that the tall tale is an art form indigenous to America, or that it is conspicuously associated with the frontier. That tall tales have been and still are told all over America is now a well established fact. The texts and comparative notes in the *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin*, especially as compiled by Herbert Halpert, give much evidence; in an article in the *New England Quarterly* in 1943 and one in the *New York Folklore Quarterly* in 1947 I reprinted nineteenth-century tall tales from eastern newspapers, and in the *California Folklore Quarterly* in 1946 I printed two city tall-tale fests a century and a half apart; the collections of New York and Pennsylvania folklore published by Harold W. Thompson and George Korson show that tall tales are still current in the East; and so it goes. The same patterns of exaggeration and often the same tales that Mr. Boatright retells about poor and rich soil, ignorant yokels and extreme weather have long been traditional in New England. While these tall tales do seem country bred, they scarcely emanate from the "frontier." Mose the Bowery b'hoys exhibits the same rowdy humor and equalitarian spirit of Davy Crockett right in the heart of New York.

As tall tales and comic anecdotes are spread all over America, so do they range all over Europe. Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index* and Bolte and Polivka's *Anmerkungen* give references to European lying tales.¹ I have heard Boatright's

¹ Cf. my note to Joe Woods' story, "Why I Was Not at My Father's Wedding," in *Western Folklore*, VIII (April, 1949), pp. 131-2.

tale of the big kettle that cooks the big turnip from a Cornishman, set in Cornwall, and his story of the dude hunter and the bear from a Finn who spoke no English. A French-Canadian introduced me to a cycle of strong-man exploits from Quebec. Even Indians told tall tales just like ours, as in the Iagoo whoppers collected by *Schoolcraft*. For anecdotes of fools who correspond to our bumpkins and greenhorns there is of course Clouston's *Book of Noodles*. European humor links up with social satire, too, say in the Balkan stories of Hodja Nasreddin and the Finnish ones of Jussi the crofter, where the man of the people continually discomfits the aristocracy.

On the other hand, the humor of the Crockett almanacs and similar sources contain ideas and prejudices that are the opposite of liberal. The almanacs are full of intolerance and jingoism when it comes to Negroes, Indians, Mexicans and the English.

In his chapter on "Free Speech" Mr. Boatright says that the speech devices he is discussing are common to the unsophisticated everywhere. But in this instance the comic word-making of the almanacs (ramstogenous, boliferate) does seem the kind of local frontier development he wants to accord the tall tale. Eastern and English comic almanacs and chapbooks have none of the Crockett idiom.

But the only way to challenge Mr. Boatright's emphases is with studies as skillful as his for other sections of the country or for other countries.

Richard M. Dorson

Michigan State College

A Treasury of Southern Folklore, edited by B. A. Botkin. With a Foreword by Douglas Southall Freeman. Crown Publishers, New York, 1949. xxiv, 776. \$4.00.

In this volume Mr. Botkin continues the swing around the country which he began in *A Treasury of New England Folklore*, and the virtues and limitations of his method are once more apparent. His voluminous collection includes more than fifty songs, a large selection of folk tales, and a good sampling of the yarn-spinner's "stretcher." A most interesting section describes Southern folkways, including characteristic foods, pastimes, superstitions, and the like; a few riddles, street cries, and proverbs also find their way into the book. More than half the collection is of a different sort, however: largely anecdotal, it might be called "oddities of Southern life," or to use a favorite phrase of Mr. Botkin's, "folk-say." This latter material reflects, albeit loosely, Southern attitudes toward hero-worship, clichés of religious and political activity, the flavor of state and provincial rivalries. The book contains much that is fresh, for Mr. Botkin has

not only ranged widely through printed sources of all sorts, but has also taken advantage of rich archival materials from the Library of Congress and the field collections of state Writers Projects.

As a mirror of the Southern mind, this book is invaluable. The cumulative effect of its pages is to produce a strong impression of unity amid the diversity of race, place and time. The Southerner's fondness for story-telling, his defensive cultivation of sectional loyalties, his conscious or unconscious acceptance of myth and tradition in preference to sober history — all these attitudes are as transparent as we should expect them to emerge from an anthropologist's study of a primitive tribe. Not that the South is noticeably more primitive than are other sections of this country; but so often does the Southerner think of his glories in terms of the past that the myths of grandeur and heroism, of plantation and hillside, remain vital in his image of his land and his being. In other sections the familiar materials of folklore may be fugitive and evanescent; whereas in the South a conscious interest in the past has not only kept history vivid and alive, but has allowed that legendary image of the past to shape and even dominate present-day culture.

It is perhaps for this reason that Mr. Botkin has found it difficult to decide what is folklore and what is not. But in producing an interesting book he has blunted even his own broad definition of the term:

In a purely oral culture everything is folklore. In modern society what distinguishes folklore from the rest of culture is the preponderance of the handed-down over the learned element and the prepotency that the popular imagination derives from and gives to custom and tradition.

There is none of the "handed-down" in Jonathan Daniels' account of Tom Wolfe's funeral, or in Robert E. Lee's description of his horse *Traveler*, or in John Gunther's comments on Senator Claghorn, or in historical accounts of the Hatfield-McCoy feud, the death of Floyd Collins, the life of the outlaw John A. Murrell. Such extracts may contain the fact from which legend and tradition are woven; they may be interesting documentary evidence — bench-marks, as it were — for the student of folklore; they are undeniably part of the total picture of Southern civilization; but if we are profitably to distinguish folklore from "the rest of culture," we must surely exclude a good deal from these pages.

Moreover, Mr. Botkin has not appeared to discriminate between careful recorders of folk phenomena actually observed and journalists whose standards demand a "good story" at any price. Botkin's own recorded interviews with numerous Southerners, for instance, show the folk memory unadorned; but it seems dubious that a single attribution of Southern locale to a commonplace story (e.g., "My mother was a Mead") is enough to enshrine it forever as a part

of Southern folklore. This disparity of criteria is inevitable in a volume drawn from such a wealth of sources, and it must be said that Mr. Botkin has avoided much of the sentimentality that so often disfigures the folklore collection. But the absence of an adequate governing principle leaves the reader bewildered even when he has been beautifully entertained.

If any anecdote can be admitted into Mr. Botkin's canon, the same cannot be said of his approach to folksong and ballad. Here his sense of oral transmission is generally firm, and as a consequence this section is perhaps the most satisfactory in the entire volume. Among the familiar songs are "The Blue-Tail Fly," with a tune closer to minstrel tradition than to Burl Ives; "The Ship Titanic," to the tune of "Little Joe the Wrangler"; and a fresh version of the ever-varied "Boll Weevil." The well-balanced selection includes game songs, Negro work songs, a group of Civil War ditties, some Anglo-American examples, and a number of religious songs. Botkin has drawn not only from printed materials, but also from relatively unfamiliar commercial records and from the albums of *Folk Music of the United States*, issued by the Library of Congress.

In the final analysis, perhaps what disappoints one in Mr. Botkin's book is not the contents, but rather the title. For it would seem less desirable to redefine folklore to fit his contents than to look upon the volume for what it is—a popular reader, reflecting very ably the lights and shadows of the Southern mind.

Claude M. Simpson, Jr.

The Ohio State University

Quest For Myth, by Richard Chase. Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1949. viii, 150. \$3.25.

Mr. Chase has made a twofold offering to the current speculation over mythology. In the first four-fifths of his book he is concerned with a history of the modern European and American thought about myth's nature and origins, and in the concluding section he attempts an illustration of his own original thesis. His history is useful, through pared to the dryest bones of summary and criticism, but the past two centuries are to him first of all a controversialist's Tom Tiddler's ground strewn with variously useful ideas, the totality of which demonstrates only the inadequacy of all earlier thought and the necessity for a new theory, to the construction of which Mr. Chase devotes his more intricate efforts. Certain theorists of the past are welcomed as precursors of Mr. Chase's present, while others are dismissed for their failure to anticipate the needs which he describes in our particular time and culture. His farsighted ones are Vico, Herder, Lang, Freud (though not the Freudians nor Freud's own metapsychology), and the "American anthropologists." His blind or misguided seers are

Bayles, Voltaire, and Max Müller. In addition, there seems reason to believe that over all his work, without explicit reference, the spirit of Jung hovers as a presiding if not quite satisfied genius.

Mr. Chase's almost explicit loyalties, in other words, are to an embracing doctrine of romantic irrationalism, one which is invoked to establish myth in the human consciousness as an active and necessary cognitive or ontological mode. Mr. Chase uses neither of these philosophical concepts and in fact suggests that he would not accept the application of either to his argument. But in practice he wavers between them and on the brink of them continually, and at least part of the obfuscation of his often valuable insights comes from his hedging, his final unwillingness to give himself up fully to the logic of his case. Perhaps his otherwise valuable modesty is at fault here. In his foreword he declares that his intent is a limited one. "My purpose is to perform some of the spadework which the current interest in myth appears to call for." But also he states, "The first critical step toward an understanding of mythological literature is to rescue myth from those who see in it only the means and ends of philosophy, religious dogma, psychoanalysis or semantics." And, "It is my hope that the present study takes this step." The effort in itself is worthwhile. But perhaps such a step is sufficiently delicate to warrant a more precise effort than is ordinarily understood as "spadework." Mr. Chase, in a word, is bound not only to separate myth from what it seems to him not to be, but, in order to show how such a separation is warranted, to identify it clearly for what it is. In this latter regard, his efforts are confused and incomplete. Myth, as it is commonly known, is bound up precisely with philosophy, religion and the other cultural disciplines from which Mr. Chase would sever it. Considered with relation to any of these, it has a demonstrable existence and character. Consider what Plato's myth of the cave does for his doctrine or what the Oedipus myth does for psychoanalysis. But, when with Mr. Chase, we separate such myths from their contexts and try to consider what they do of and by themselves, we can only answer with him that each gives an essentially aesthetic enrichment to its subject. The thought, both of Plato and Freud, can be abstractly put. But the myths which each has used give point and presence to the separate conclusions which would otherwise be lacking. Myth bids intellect share its realm with imagination.

One may therefore agree with the first stage achieved by Mr. Chase's sometimes crabwise movement toward a conclusion: ". . . any narrative or poem which reaffirms the dynamism and vibrancy of the world, which fortifies the ego with the impression that there is a magically potent brillancy or dramatic force in the world, may be called a myth."

But Mr. Chase will not rest with this aesthetic doctrine in itself, promising

as it is. Falling back into anthropological inquiry, he concludes further that myth not only insists upon brillancy or dramatic force in the experience with which it deals, but that it does so by communicating the *mana*, or mysterious potency inherent in it. Myth, that is, becomes a more than aesthetic power; it is a *revelation* of the nature of things — a lifting of the veil of familiarity which ordinarily obscures the import of experience so that all may be aware of the true power, the true reality in the thing which each beholds. Mr. Chase explicitly scouts the idea that such a lifting of the veil reveals any supernatural reality, but he does insist on myth as a "preternatural" force, ". . . the *Uncanny, the Wonderful, the Mysterious, the Powerful, the Terrible, the Dangerous, the Extraordinary*." From the depths of conviction suggested by his capital letters and italics, Mr. Chase defines myth as a view of reality in its own right, for the world *is*, he would say, the thing suggested by his epithets. However implicitly, he aligns himself with a positive irrationalism which he is not willing to admit, but one nevertheless inseparable from his doctrine if the latter is more than emotional drum-tapping. *Mana* in myth, that is, must either be something in itself, or it must be a force generated by a particular concatenation of other things — of the subjects, patterns and images of the myth. And since to admit the latter might be again to make myth a servant of poetry, or faith or knowledge, Mr. Chase, it would seem, must rest with the former choice.

He does so more explicitly toward the end of his argument when he says that ". . . the irrational elements of myth are . . . the constantly repeated and regenerated motifs of the mythmaker's imagination." Which, with sufficient clarity, suggests that myth is a way of working toward a kind of experience not otherwise obtainable — that in the tales which make up myth there is a content, not a mere effect, which gives them their force. But such a conclusion, of course, contradicts Mr. Chase's earlier definition of myth as aesthetic, unless one proceed with him to the last stage in which he concludes that aesthetic power as it occurs in literature is the same primeval force which recurs in the mythmaker's imagination.

This final twist in the tangled skein, the identification of literature and myth, seems the most untenable of all unless one is willing to dismiss from the ranks of literature everything which does not display a power stemming from primeval sources and one conforming to the recurrent motifs of mythology. Such a dismissal would be very drastic indeed, as Mr. Chase demonstrates when, in discussing Yeats' *Among School Children*, he is forced to exclude from his discussion all but the first three stanzas of the poem. Mr. Chase, we might say, cannot have it all ways at once; either myth and literature, though sharing common ground, do differ (as do free ranging imagination and a dependence on primitive motifs) or they do not. But in the latter case Mr. Chase must show

that all of literature is myth and all myth literature, which duty he avoids. Still, to a clear parting of the ways he will not bring himself. He seems to want for his argument the current literary prestige of irrationalism without accepting its necessary embarrassments. He nowhere suggests that his irrationality is positive, as Jung's theory of myth more honestly does; he explicitly, in fact, disclaims any interest in this gambit and so removes one opportunity for a resolution of his ambiguity. But his concept of the "preternatural" does nevertheless lead him directly to a necessity. This he seeks to avoid by his suggestions about the literary nature of myth. For some reason, he is not willing to say that myth is a kind of literature which takes its power from the eternal primitive and that ours is an age in which the primitive seems to fill a special need.

That myth is literary, that myth is primeval; each of these is a tenable point, and both, within limitations, may be true at once. But to conclude thence that the literary and the primeval are the same is only to run afoul of the Aristotelian fallacy of the undistributed middle, unless one provide more apparatus and more information than is apparent in Mr. Chase's work.

Bernard I. Duffey

Michigan State College

Pennsylvania Songs and Legends, edited by George Korson. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1949. 474. \$5.00.

This volume continues true to form in that it restricts itself to a very narrow phase of folk culture — songs and ballads, stories and legends. It is regrettable that students of folklore in America almost never concern themselves with the whole fabric of traditional culture.

Pennsylvania Songs and Legends is a welcome volume, for it is the first attempt at publishing a more than local collection of Pennsylvania's folksongs and folktales. Edited by George Korson, it is a symposium of thirteen (!) contributors.

The most important contribution of new material in this anthology is the chapter on Pennsylvania Dutch folksongs by Thomas R. Brendle and William S. Troxell, both veteran field-collectors. This is the first published collection of folksongs of the Pennsylvania Dutch country.

The British folksong tradition is presented by Samuel P. Bayard, an authority on the folk music of southwestern Pennsylvania. Bayard shows how in the Keystone state the folksong of the Northeast and of the South crossed and mingled. He offers some twenty ballads collected over the years.

The religious folk music of the Old Order Amish — the strangest Protestant music in America — is ably treated by J. William Frey, co-editor of the folklore

bi-weekly, the *Pennsylvania Dutchman*. The Amish hymn tunes, written down for the first time only in recent years, have been handed down orally from generation to generation, century after century.

George Korson, whose publication on the folksongs of the miner are well-known, has a long chapter on the songs of the Pennsylvania coal miner. The folksongs of an industrial city are presented by Jacob A. Evanson.

The stories and legends (one had better not use the word folktale here) are less ably presented than the folk music. The Pennsylvania Dutch folktale, for instance, is not even considered.

Col. Henry W. Shoemaker presents three romanticized versions of central Pennsylvania tales. Most readable are the tall tales of Pike County by Robert J. Wheeler.

There are three chapters on transportation lore — Howard C. Frey on the Conestoga wagoners, Lewis E. Theiss on the canallers and Freeman H. Hubbard on the railroaders.

Industrial lore is treated by Harry Botsford who writes on the oilmen and by J. Herbert Walker, on lumberjacks.

The least rewarding chapter in this volume is the one on the Cornplanter Indians by Merle H. Deardorff.

Alfred L. Shoemaker

Franklin and Marshall College

Hullabaloo and Other Singing and Folk Games, compiled by Richard Chase.

Illustrated by Joshua Tolford. With six piano settings by Hilton Ruffy.

Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1949. 57. Cloth, \$2.00; paper, \$1.25.

Richard Chase's small volume is dedicated "to the children in Alabama, in Maine, in North Carolina, in Massachusetts, in Virginia, in England, who taught me many of the games in this book" and is compiled for children of all ages as well as for adults who are interested in the education and amusement of the young. The book is a teaching book and as such is a good one. The illustrations, diagrams and piano settings, along with the simple word directions can be followed by twelve year old children with little or no help from adults.

These singing and folk games are really the kind of figure dances which were developed as "playparty games" in the Midwest during an era when the fiddle was considered the devil's instrument. So, instead of fiddle music, the group sang; and instead of a figure caller, the words of the song gave the directions. Among the eighteen games included here are versions of the old favorites, "Paw Paw Patch," "King William," "Three Dukes" and "The Noble Duke of York." Mr. Chase briefly instructs children on the lineage and sources of some of the

games by quoting and citing Alice Bertha Gomme, W. W. Newell, and John Harrington Cox.

Any book should be judged by its purpose. First, is the purpose a worthy one? Second, if so, does it live up to that purpose? *Hullabao* is not intended as an authentic scientific record of folk game customs of a given group of people of a given period, and should not be judged as such. For instance, Mr. Chase states in a footnote that his version of "Turn the Glasses Over" is a combination of versions he has found in Delaware, Virginia and Kentucky. He makes no pretension of being a scientific folklorist. He does attempt to interpret the folklore process to a specific audience. That purpose seems to me a worthy one and the book fulfills that purpose.

Dorothy Mills Howard

State Teachers College, Frostburg, Maryland

It's An Old Wild West Custom, by Duncan Emrich. The Vanguard Press, New York, 1949. ix, 313. \$3.00.

Of this book we may say good things and qualifying things; for it is excellent in what it purports to be, but open to delimitations on some other grounds. It is a lively, entertaining and reliable introduction to some of the central lore of the old West, suggesting what its human and regional scenery may still retain of interest, in terms of the old past. Its author, Duncan Emrich, is eminently fitted for the assignment, since he knows the West first-hand and more than sectionally. He is at the same time a literate and travelled gentleman, an officer in international societies of folklore, and Chief of the Folklore Section of the Library of Congress. He is at present preparing a larger sampling of the written sources for the early Pacific and Nevada West.

The qualifying comments are of two sorts, the first merely a statement of what the book is not. It is not primarily a contribution to scholarship on the West, nor will the specialist find much that is new in it. It is a popular handbook, introductory in nature, and should have a good sale in tourist centers or as a gift book for those who do not know much of the West. It is somewhat slanted toward mining camp lore and Nevada scenery, though it recognizes other areas and interests. The West is treated as spacious and variegated, encouraging the development of a different type of man. Out of its character arise the legends, the place names, the language and the manners, the provocations to roughness and even sudden death, the tall tales and the hoaxes. Why these latter? Because, since people would not believe the simple truth, such as shirt-sleeve warmth and freezing blizzard on the same day and in the same spot, they must be told what they will believe, the exaggeration. In short, the book will

be one of the livelier in the American Customs Series, one to be read with relaxed enjoyment, but not one for bibliographical researchers.

The second restriction goes deeper. The spirit of such a book is customarily one of gusto and amusement over the good old days of the bad man; and this one is no exception. Actually, as more thoughtful critics are coming to see and to say, the western bad man was a far from lovely character; he was often moronic, often vicious, and on his social side frequently a sullen, even frightened man, intimidated by the lonely spaces and the exactation of a hard frontier, adopting a hard, mask-like face and a quick trigger to cover his inadequacy. To investigate such a conception would radically shift the tone of Mr. Emrich's chapter, "To Die With Boots On." It would also acknowledge a more realistic approach to the West than the entertainment of tourists with another species of tall tale, the glamor of the bad man.

Wilson O. Clough

University of Wyoming

The Devil in Massachusetts, by Marion L. Starkey. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1949. xviii, 310, vii. \$3.50.

The subtitle of this book adequately explains its intent: "A Modern Inquiry into the Salem Witch Trials." Miss Starkey wishes to review the story in the light of some new facts and up-to-date psychological insights, but her primary purpose appears to be the mere retelling, in a highly dramatic fashion. There is no question that she makes those frenzied days very exciting to us, and though she reconstructs freely, her documentation enables one readily to check her more purple flights. For the sober, straightforward history we must still read Upham and Nevins, for rather than repeat them she has brought off this novelistic tour de force. But waiving the question of the narrative technique and its creation of a traumatic atmosphere, we want to know what new illumination Miss Starkey gives to the witch terror of 1692.

There are three disciplines which presumably can give this subject fresh meanings, those of intellectual history, psychology and folklore. Miss Starkey concentrates on the second. Her Freudian hypotheses attempt to make sense of the grim business, and for our age they sound plausible enough. The girls who controlled the mischief gradually became automata, living in a dream world; the accused at the bar who made confessions, like the slave Tituba, responded to hypnotic suggestion on the part of the judges; and of course the contagion of group hysteria spread the panic from town to town. Miss Starkey suggests that the older afflicted girls were sexually frustrated, and would have given up the limelight for a lover without a qualm.

Further, the drabness of Puritan life, its preoccupation with evil which "demanded its catharsis," and the universal susceptibility to demoniac possession, all contributed to the emotional orgy of the witch fright. Because of these psychic unbalances, men lost their reason and succumbed to delusion. The conflict between reason and unreason, and the final somber triumph of enlightenment, forms Miss Starkey's dramatic theme and contemporary appeal. (The star names on the jacket single out the analogy with current witch-hunts for their phrase-making.)

The record does not read like that to me. If Miss Starkey had employed the data of intellectual history and of folklore, her story might lose in dramatic conflict but gain in insights;¹ it would perhaps appear as a contest between two ways of reasoning, rather than between reason and unreason. The supporters of the witchcraft belief were neither foolish nor irrational men, for the most part; they included the best trained and educated minds in the colonies, the Mathers, Samuel Sewall, William Stoughton; in fact everybody more or less believed in witchcraft, and opinion differed only as to its extent and provability. Christians accepted diabolism with the same logic that they accepted Christ. Miss Starkey follows the prevalent argument that the grossest credulity and folly lay in the crediting of spectral evidence. But the Puritan magistrates rejected the really silly water test for the plausible empiricism of the touch test: when the afflicted ceased their fits upon touching the accused, thus returning their shapes to them, onlookers saw, if not the shapes, at least the sudden shift from fever to calm in the bewitched. Men of the seventeenth century knew nothing, except intuitively, of psychoanalysis, but they had absorbed a traditional theology that legitimized Satanism and witchery, and a traditional folklore that sanctioned ghosts, visions, ill-wishing, shape-shifting and black arts. Between the groundswell of popular lore and the heights of theological exposition, New Englanders found plenty of evidence and reason for existence of witches. Witches confessed, and gave circumstantial accounts of their black masses and bloody stranglings. With the real enough data of evil all about them, why should Christians deny the devil anyway? Folklore merely elaborated his techniques of operation in daily life. When the accusations of alleged witches got completely out of hand, both as to numbers and respectability of the accused, then reasoning men began to question the proofs they had previously accepted (see for instance the rational objections of John Hale, pp. 275-6), and think through to another conclusion: the afflicted girls were not bewitched but demented, or playacting, or maliciously feigning. If Cotton Mather puts his best mental efforts to work, studies the authorities, makes scrupulous laboratory tests, and comes out believing in the witchcrafts, he

¹Thus see Charles W. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*. 2 vols., Boston, 1867, I, 327-463.

may be wrong, but he is not therefore a fool. A later age may regard our psychology as a mystic second sight not so different from the older necromancy.

What strikes us now as bizarre sounded commonplace in the seventeenth century. Not a New England town but contained its local witch legends, as you can see in the town histories, where the traditions were recorded, still breathing, in the nineteenth century. And the Salem hysteria shrinks to a pinpoint when viewed against the history of witchcraft in western Europe. Miss Starkey, who knows her psychology and theology, seems not at home in the literature of witchcraft and folklore. If she includes Kittredge's classic but now aging work in her bibliography, she should balance it with R. Trevor Davies' *Four Centuries of Witch-Beliefs* (London, c. 1947), which revises his views on Salem. The "thesis" she credits to Christiana Hole belongs of course to Margaret Murray's well-known work, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*. Miss Hole's name does not belong in a serious bibliography. No books on folklore alone are listed, although many folk motifs turn up in her pages. I list a number here.

Tales and nonsense rhymes of Tituba, the half-Carib half-Negro slave (11); fortune-telling, conjuring with sieve, scissors and candle, and palmistry (15-16); witch cake made of rye meal and urine (31); devil's marks on witches (37-38); the test of touch (38); devil assumes shape of witches (38); familiars (41); ill wishing (41); the devil's book (45); witches' sabbaths (46); witch-riding (46); witch cannot cry (72); the black mass (79); witch-murder (80); torturing an effigy (91); charm to avoid the devil (96); spectral rape and demon child (97); tormented person relieved when witch is chained (107); frogs as diabolic creatures (109); haunted house (118); supernatural strength (121); enchanted animals (173-175); witch walks dryshod on wet ground (175); witch prophecy comes true (176-177); cats as diabolic creatures (186); devil covenant (186); ship haunted at sea (204); ghost reveals murder (211-212); ghost of witch pleads innocence (216); spectral warriors (230); types of devil belief (241-243).²

Richard M. Dorson

Michigan State College

²The two following references, which may not readily come to the eyes of American folklorists, have relevance to the Salem trials. Macdonald Critchley, "Huntington's Chorea and East Anglia," in *The Journal of State Medicine*, XLVII (London, 1934), 575-587, suggests the startling hypothesis that the above-named rare disease was carried to New England by an East Anglian family and contributed to the witchcraft cases, through the debility it caused in its victims.

Sona R. Burstein, "Aspects of the Psychopathology of Old Age Revealed in Witchcraft Cases of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *British Medical Bulletin*, VI, No. 1-2 (1949), pp. 63-72, surveys the problem of old women as witches in the light of modern geriatric knowledge, and includes a full bibliography.

NOTE: A recent catalogue of the American-Scandinavian Foundation lists among its available publications Sigurd B. Hustvedt's *Ballad Criticism in Scandinavia and Great Britain During the Eighteenth Century*, which appeared under the Foundation's imprint in 1916, and which the book-buyer would now normally expect to search or wait for. (116 E. 64th St., New York City, \$7.50.) In thirty-five years our knowledge of this period has greatly increased. We know more about the individual labors of men like Ramsay, Percy, Burns, and Ritson, and about the widespread interest in ballads among the *literati*. We recognize now a greater complexity of literary movements in which the so-called revival of ballad interest took place. And we may criticize this book for the narrowness of its interest in the "traditional" (i. e. Child) ballad (a restrictiveness which subsequent folklore study has more than abundantly compensated for), or for a tendency too often to assume that eighteenth-century writers meant this kind of ballad when they used the word. Yet it remains an important account of the growth of critical opinion about the character of traditional literature from pre-Addisonian simplicity to the sophistication of Ritson and Scott — a vital period which laid the foundations for modern knowledge and misconceptions of folklore, and contributed not a little to folklore's own folklore. In addition it is a valuable chapter in the broader study of the literary tastes of the century.

B. P. M.

